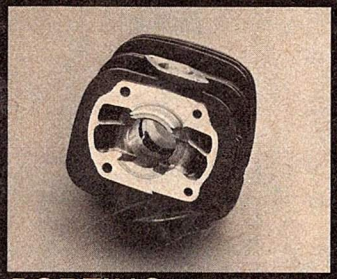
X "PARTS FOR PROS"



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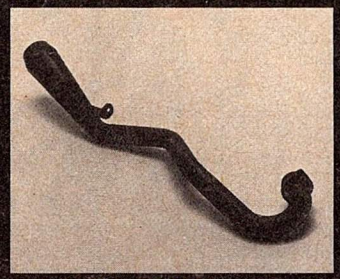
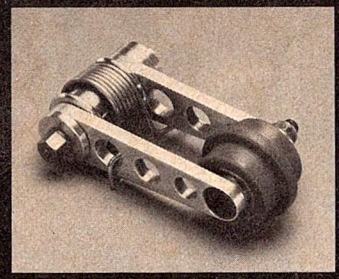


TT-500 PIPE Complete pipe weighs just 3 pounds—over 10 pounds less than the stock system. Provides freer engine breathing for 20% horsepower increase. Routes in tight to the engine for pipe and leg protection. **$55.** With silencer **$65.**



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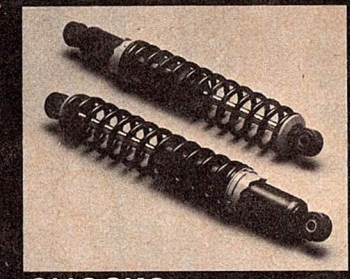

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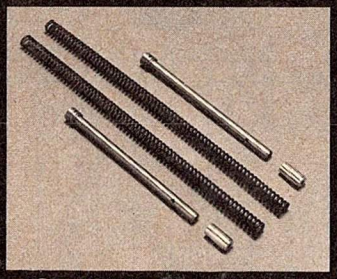

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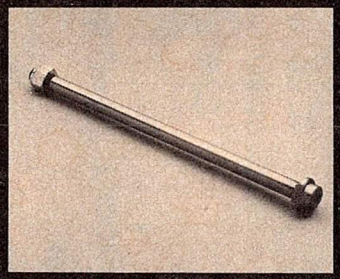

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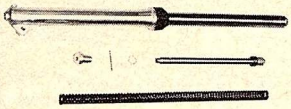

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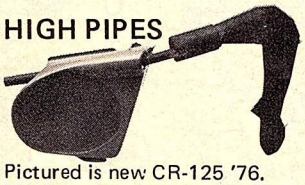
CR-125 '76	$59.50
CR-250 (S&W)	$44.62
XL-250/350 (S&W)	$44.62

HIGH PIPES



Pictured is new CR-125 '76. We dyno tune and custom fit all pipes for top performance, and design them so they won't toast your legs. Spark arrestors available.

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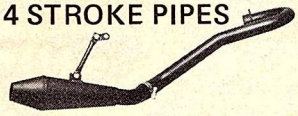
MT-250 All	$69.95
RM SUZUKI	
RM-125 '75,'76	$79.50
RM-250 '75,'76	$79.50
RM-370 '75,'76	$79.50
WORKS LOW PIPES	
CR-125	$54.95
CR-250	$69.95

4 STROKE PIPES



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XL350 (hi/lo)	$49.95
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TT500 (hi) w/megaphone	$44.95

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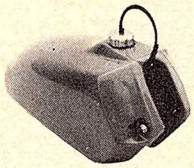

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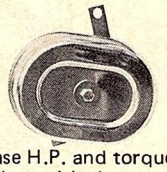

Increase H.P. and torque. Complete with element $19.95

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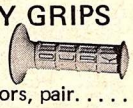

All colors, pair. . . . . $ 3.95

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Lengths available: 13, 13.5
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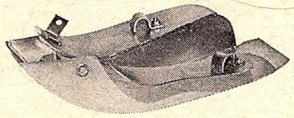

Protect your cases.

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CR-125 '76	$24.95
MR-175 All	$24.95
CR-250 '73,'74	$24.95
CR-250 '75,'76	$24.95
XL-250/350 All	$24.95
SUZUKI	
RM-100/125 '75,'76	$24.95
TM-100/125 '73-'76	$24.95
RM-125A '76	$24.95
RM-250/370 '76	$24.95
TM-250 '75	$24.95
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250/400 Mono. '75,'76	$24.95
TT-500 '76	$24.95
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KAWASAKI	
KX-250/400	$24.95

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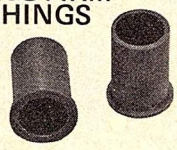

1 year guarantee.

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CR-125, CR-250, XL-250	
MR-175, MR-250, XL-350	
SUZUKI	
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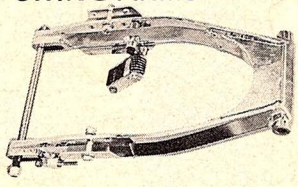
SWING ARMS



CROSS-UP ALLOY	
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RM-125/250/370	$129.00
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XR-75	$69.95
CR-125	$89.95
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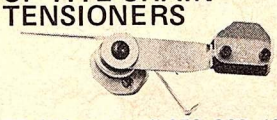

CR-1 Yamaha, all 250, 360, 400
CR-2 Yamaha, all 125YZ, YZ100C, 125C MX125C
CR-3 Yamaha TT500
CR-4 Yamaha YZ80, A,B,C
CR-5 Suzuki RM250, 370
CR-6 Suzuki RM100, 125
CR-7 Honda CR125
CR-7A Honda CR125 using 520 chain kit
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CR-9 Honda XR75
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CR-14 KTM 250, 400
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CR-16 Husky 125, 175, GP
CR-17 Husky automatic
CR-18 KX125 Kawasaki
CR-19 KX250, 400 Kawasaki
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CR-21 Hodaka
CR-22 Motovilla
CR-23 Montesa
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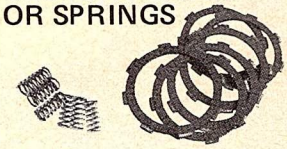

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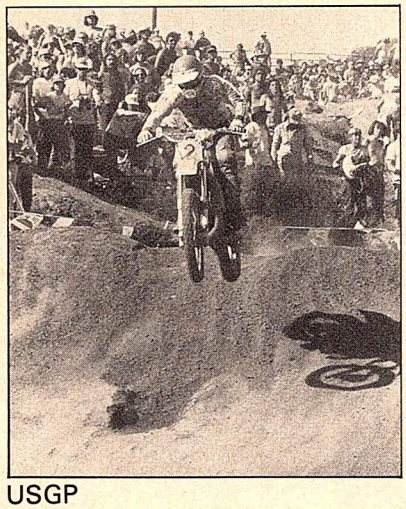
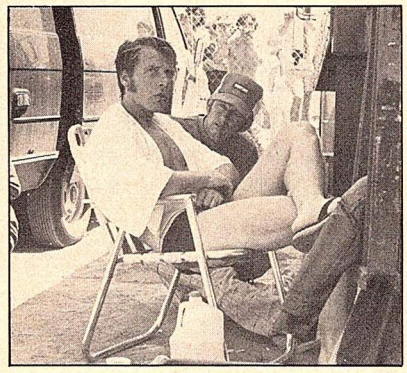


USGP



DECOSTER, WOLSINK AND LACKEY

MOTOCROSS ACTION MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 1977

VOLUME FIVE
NUMBER TEN

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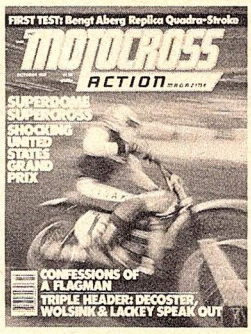
FIRST TEST: Bengt Aberg Replica Quadra-Stroke
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SUPERDOME SUPERCROSS
SHOCKING UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX
CONFESSIONS OF A FLAGMAN
TRIPLE HEADER: DECOSTER, WOLSINK & LACKEY SPEAK OUT

COVER: Rex Backman captured a fleeting glimpse of Jammin' Jimmy Weinert, the 1976 Supercross Champion, in action in the New Orleans Superdome.

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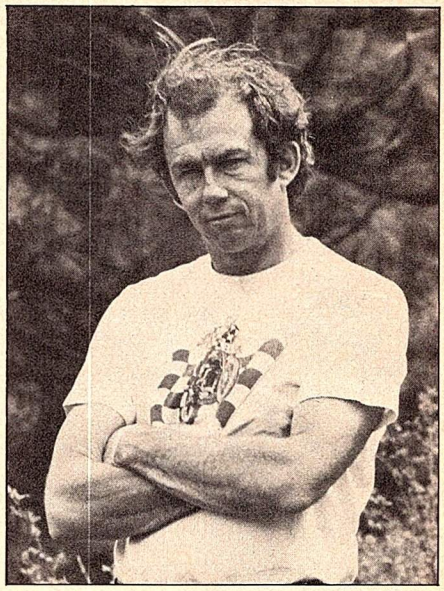
On The Mainjet

By Dick Miller



☐ Sometimes you're the good guy, sometimes you're the bad guy. In the eyes of the promoters of this year's USGP at Carlsbad, California, MOTOCROSS ACTION's staff were definitely the bad guys.

It all started with our somewhat irreverent article on sneaking into the pits which Jody bylined. Since I'm the editor of MXA, I'm responsible for whatever is in the magazine, no matter who writes it, but nonetheless, the repercussions were interesting, to say the least.

If you didn't know, it's customary for press people to be admitted into related events without charge. Also, there is usually a provision for the press person to take a guest with him, wife, girlfriend, etc. This may seem like a pretty good deal if we are only there to spectate, but when we are covering an event and taking photos, it's more work than play. Some promoters realize this and make the job of a reporter or photographer easier by catering to him to some extent. I'm not talking about stroking him, I'm talking about helping to make it as comfortable as possible for the press guy to do his job. I'm also talking about legitimate press people, not freeloaders — who seem to come out of the woodwork when you happen to be connected with a prestigious event.

Getting back to the USGP, I had arranged for a pass for Jody's girlfriend and somehow, when Jody signed for his credentials, this pass was non-existent. Mistakes, of course, happen, but there was a discussion beforehand about Jody being a bad guy and it seemed too much of a coincidence that this ticket was the only mistake. Jody shined it and bought a ticket for his girl. Ordinarily we don't pay too much attention to how much it costs to get into an event, but in this case Jody learned first-hand. He paid his $10 but balked at the extra $4 for bleacher seats and $2 for a program. He figured that she should have been reading MXA and therefore didn't need a program.

It looked like a lot of people also balked at the prices, because the attendance looked substantially down from the preceding year. A shame really, because the racing was better this year. This might not be a valid reason, because the pre-race advertising for the USGP, at least what I saw, never gave any prices. Maybe other people are like me and when they see something advertised without a price, they figure it's going to be expensive and therefore the price was left off so it wouldn't scare people away. This is not to argue with the pricing, but to call attention to the fact that the omission of it makes you wonder why. God only knows that the promotion of a GP is a difficult undertaking, to say the least, and Trippe/Cox know the financial shortcomings and rewards as well as anyone and are entitled a reasonable profit. In the same light, having the only game in town doesn't guarantee success or profit. Promoting is a tough business, and there is a lot of heat in the kitchen. Obviously some promoters get a little paranoid about their event, but this "pit pass" thing got way out of hand.

We aren't above controversy and have in the past incurred the wrath of promoters because of comments about a course, etc. The only reason I'm airing this incident is because we had been getting feedback from all around us about how we were the bad guys long before any direct confrontation with Trippe/Cox occurred. The promoters, Gavin Trippe and Bruce Cox, were my friends, I thought, prior to this race. When you stand next to someone and say hello and aren't even acknowl-

edged, then you put friendship in its proper perspective, meaning good race reports, etc.

When we did the "pit pass" article in MXA that stirred up all this controversy, there was no intent to hurt any promoter, and no examples of specific races were used. It so happened that the USGP event turned into a pit pass battlefront / testing ground for the promoters. I will have to say that the USGP had the best security of any event I've ever attended, save the Superbowl. It sort of tells you something, doesn't it? Prior to this, pit passes were a joke. Either you have pit security or you don't. Any team manager will tell you that they have more problems with people with pit passes trespassing over their boundaries than they do with the general public. Also, if any promoter thought that no one was sneaking into the pits before we published an article on how to do it, he must have been sticking his head in the sand. If anything, we did a favor to promoters by publishing a guideline on how everyone is doing this. If they really want pit security, then they only have to take countermeasures to what we said. Obviously Trippe/Cox went to school on us by using our article for reference, and established effective pit security.

Prior to the first moto, Bruce Cox, his face red with anger, thrust a bogus pit pass (from MXA) in my face and asked if he should send a bill for it to my office. I replied that I'd pay for it right then if he liked, plus for my press pass. I had forgotten that there was no charge to get in the pits. It was just forbidden unless you had a pass. The guy who used it must not have been a regular reader of MXA or we're sure he never would have been apprehended. There is a rumor that the guy was a *Pop Cycle* regular and was given the bogus pit freebie by a devious MXA devotee to test the USGP security.

Oddly enough, the AMA people took our article pretty lightly, and since we were so sure they would be upset we told them about it before it hit the stands. Boy, have things changed! They even laughed. Of course, they changed their pit passes afterward, so we thought it only fair to warn them that we printed the new one also.

Somehow we've got to keep our sense of humor about all this, because getting into the pits or not isn't all that world-shaking. Personally, I think that unless there is a theft problem, people should have access to the pits to look at their heroes up close and see the factory machines. It would make the high price of a ticket more worthwhile. Steve Whitlock, Brad Lackey's mechanic, in an upcoming interview in MXA, says that they have no problem with people in the pits as long as they respect the boundaries set up around the pit. Only in Italy is this a problem because of theft.

It might be a good idea for promoters to attend an event, pay for a ticket and mingle with the crowd before they throw their own event. It brings the perspective a little closer. They should talk to the paying spectators and get their views on how to make the next race more enjoyable and profitable. There isn't much sense in listening to us, since we didn't have to pay to get in . . . up 'til now. Just for the record, Trippe/Cox honored press guest passes for the rest of my staff even though they were annoyed with us. Also, to be fair I should mention that Mike Goodwin (Superbowl of MX) wouldn't, so I paid $90 for six tickets yesterday so they could take their wives/girlfriends along while they had to work. It made me feel a little guilty!

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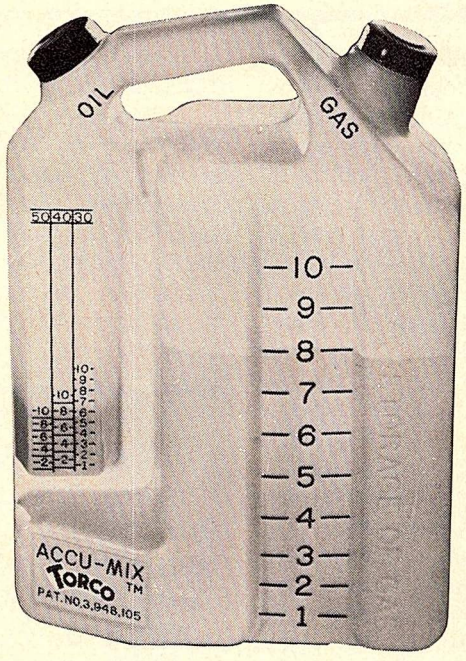

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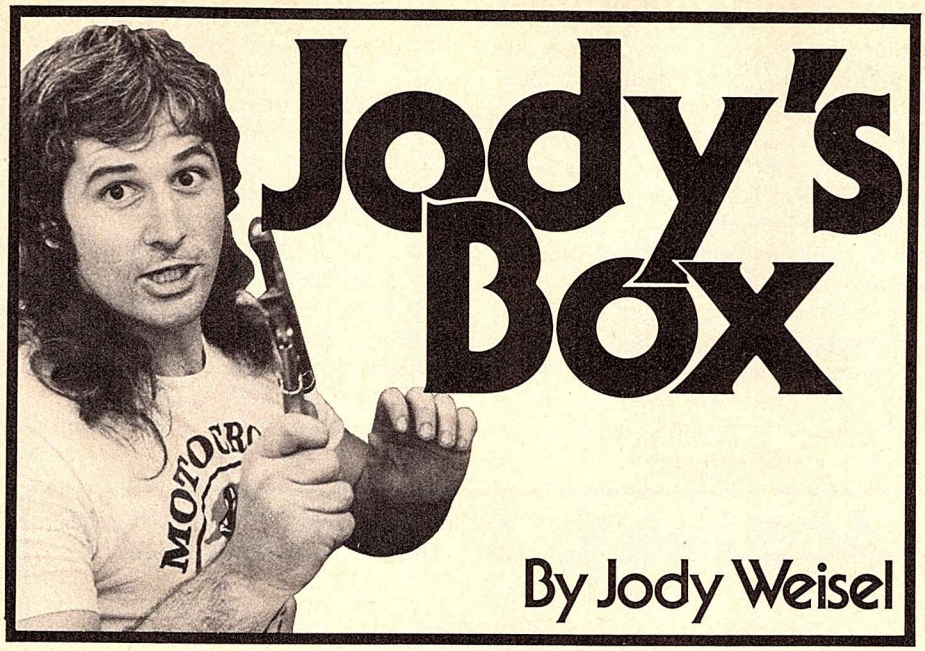

Jody's Box

By Jody Weisel

☐ One of the inevitable relationships that grow out of motocross racing is the interaction between the friendly local mechanic and the owner of a sick motorcycle. When you are running 15 grand down the back straight trying to catch the guy in eighth place only to accidentally miss a shift, your motor goes into instant trauma. If you are a factory rider, you just hop off, throw the metal warrior down and stomp back to the pits. A crack crew of factory-trained wrenches will whip the bike back into shape and you'll be back on the track in 20 minutes. A public relations guy will come down and write a press release saying that you suffered ignition failure. When factory bikes break, the press releases always say the bike either ran out of gas or suffered an ignition failure. What they mean to say is that the piston came flying through the top end and blasted the ignition coil through the gas tank. Thus the bike quit running when the gas ran out of the hole.

Unfortunately for me, I don't have a factory ride, maybe next year. So when my engine blows I drag it down to my friendly local mechanic. He doesn't fall for any PR. I can tell him it ran out of gas, but he normally notices the red rag stuck in the gaping hole in the cases. The repairer-repairee relationship is fraught with pitfalls, irritants, hostility and Freudian connotations. Perhaps my experience in motor mayhem has prepared me better than anyone for dealing with the friendly local mechanic. To that end I present to you eight tips that will make you a better customer when you bring your bike in for repairs.

1. DO NOT EXPECT YOUR MECHANIC TO SHARE YOUR DISCOMFORT.

Involvement with the repairee's suffering over the breakdown of his scoot might cause the mechanic to lose his valuable objectivity. We all know that you want your bike fixed and back on the track ten minutes after you brought it in, but the mechanic wanted to go riding ten minutes before you brought it in.

"When a factory bike breaks, the press releases always say the bike either ran out of gas or suffered an ignition failure. What they mean to say is that the piston came flying through the top end and blasted the coil . . ."

2. BE CHEERFUL AT ALL TIMES.

Your friendly local mechanic leads a busy and trying life, and he requires all the kindness he can get. People only come to see him when they are in trouble. He is a mechanic, not a bartender, so don't burden him with your woes. It is not necessary to bring flowers and candy, just a smile. And maybe he won't leave a screwdriver in your cases.

3. DO NOT SUFFER FROM BREAKDOWNS THAT YOU CANNOT AFFORD.

It is sheer arrogance to develop a mechanical problem that is beyond your financial means.

4. PAY YOUR REPAIR BILLS PROMPTLY AND WILLINGLY.

You should consider it your duty to help provide for the care and feeding of the mechanic and his family. Getting huffy over the bill is not good for two reasons: frowning causes wrinkles and he won't give you your bike until you pay.

5. DO NOT COMPLAIN IF THE REPAIRS FAIL TO STOP THE PROBLEM.

You must have faith in your mechanic. If your bike isn't performing up to par and you have it fixed, and it still isn't performing — maybe you're the problem.

6. DO NOT CALL EVERY DAY TO SEE IF IT IS DONE.

When you call a mechanic to ask if your bike is fixed yet, don't be surprised if he replies that it would be if he didn't have to answer the phone every three minutes. If you call twice a day for a week to see if your scoot is ready, don't be surprised if the handlebars fall off on the first big jump.

7. NEVER USE THE NAME OF YOUR MECHANIC IN VAIN.

The repairer-repairee relationship is a privileged one, and you have a sacred duty to protect him from exposure. Any shortcomings that have come to light in the course of getting your bike fixed should go to the grave with you. Failure to remain discreet could result in your going to your grave earlier than you planned.

8. TRY TO HAVE YOUR MOTORCYCLE SUFFER FROM BREAKDOWNS SERIOUS ENOUGH TO BE TREATED.

Remember that your friendly local mechanic has a professional reputation to uphold. Seventy-eight percent of all the work he gets in his shop says, "WILL NOT RUN" on the repair tag; 23.8 percent of these are simply out of gas, 35.2 percent have fouled spark plugs and the remaining 19 percent have something wrong with them.

The patient-doctor, lawyer-client, priest-confessor and motorcycle mechanic-repairee relationships are privileged and rare moments in the depersonalized society in which we live. They are true bonds of love. The repairer-repairee relationship is as close as man will come to a purely altruistic relationship. It is two men working in harmony to achieve the same goals without jealousy, avarice or greed entering into the picture. Truly it is man's finest hour, but don't forget to bring a wheelbarrow full of money to ensure this bliss.

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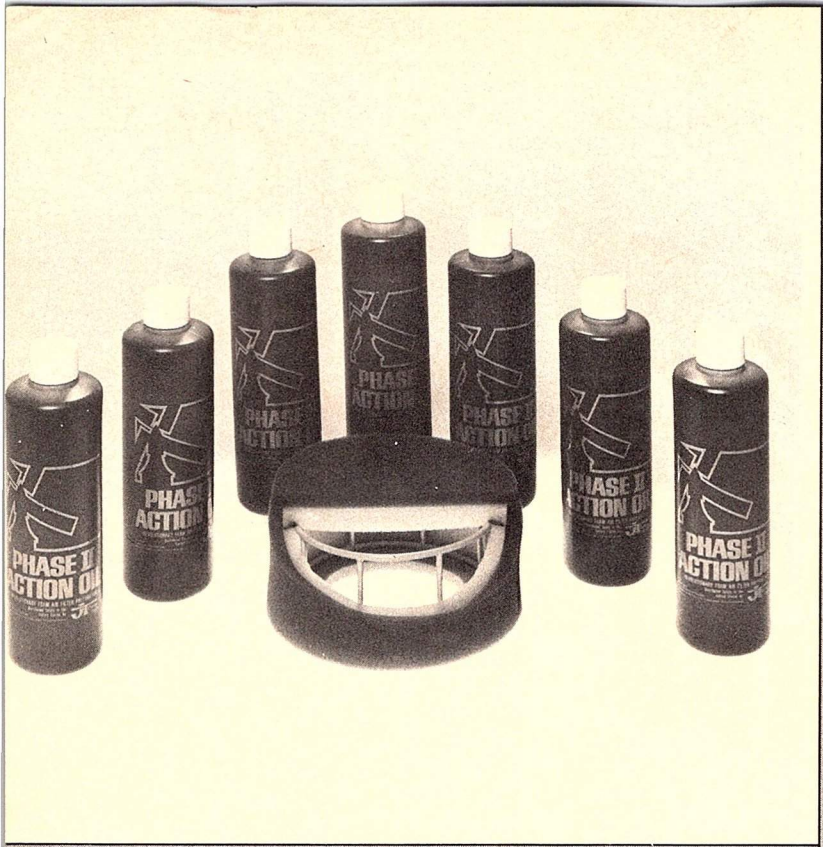

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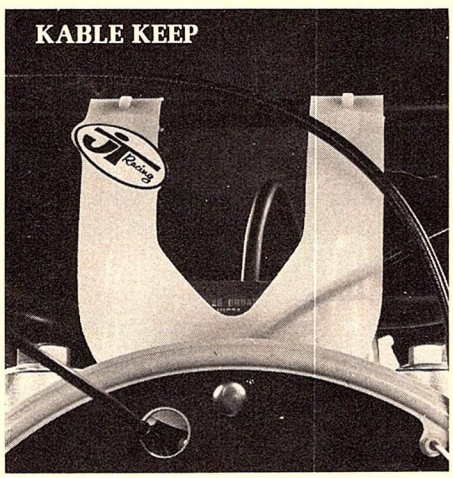

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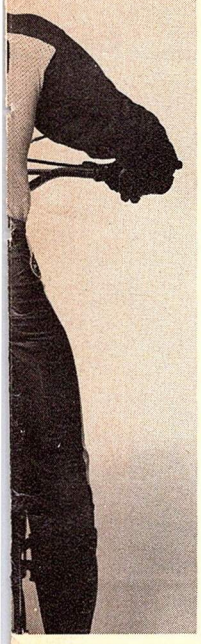

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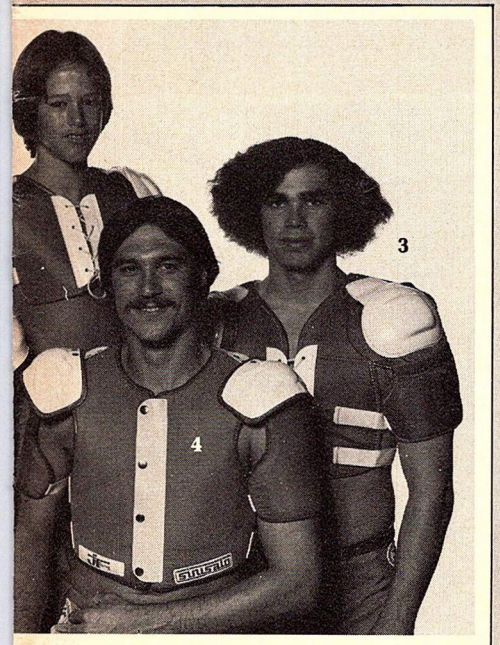

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All new kids sizes 22", 24", 26"

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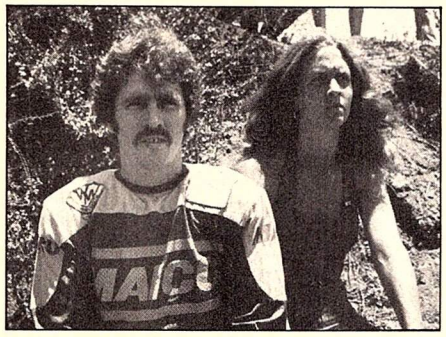
Dirt

By Holbert Holquist

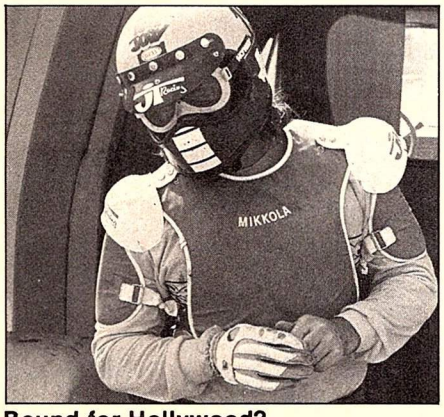


Gaylon thinks about reconsidering.

MOSIER BURNS RICE

Gassin' Gaylon Mosier has decided to tie the knot with his long-time friend Pam. Although America's top motocrossers keep getting married, only two out of the top ten National numbers have succumbed to marital bliss so far. They are Kent Howerton and Jimmy Weinert.

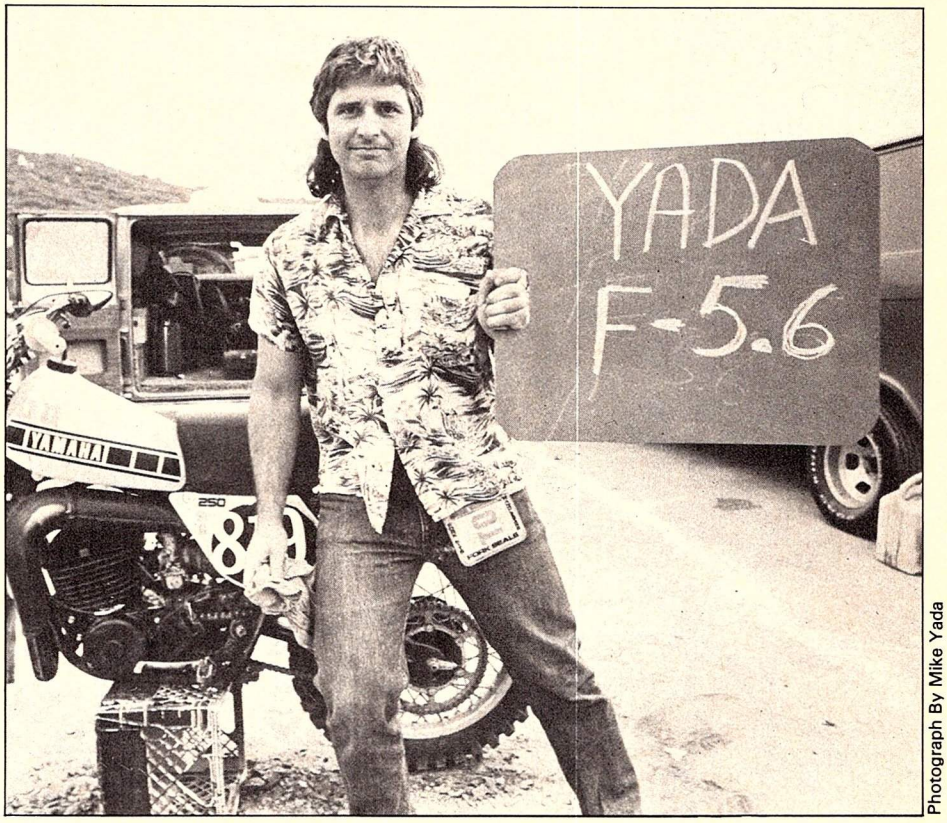
* * * *



Bound for Hollywood?

SIDEWINDER ONE

The summer release of the motocross-oriented motion picture Sidewinder One will not be the highlight of the season for the hard-core motocross fan. Holbert slipped into a premiere showing of the movie the other night and was shocked to find out that it was rated PG. Sidewinder uses up the usual MX cliches, and combines them with the movieland stereotypes. The biggest shock was catching sight of Jody escorting Hollywood starlet Susan Howard around. His mother back home in Texas would be plenty worried about the boy.



Photograph By Mike Yada

In a desperate last-ditch effort to improve the photographic excellence of MXA, Jody Weisel has resorted to pit board instructions. Here he urges photographer Mike Yada to turn it up a notch in order to capture the glory of his Hawaiian shirt.

This is Arlo Englund's CR390 Husqvarna Automatic motocrosser. It is a one-off prototype now, but by winter it could be an off-the-floor production model.

WEINERT JOINS JENNER

Bruce Jenner, who last month broke his leg, has been joined in the broken bone department by mentor Jammin' Jimmy Weinert. Jimmy was out testing his big-bore Kawasaki at Saddleback on a Tuesday afternoon and highsided onto his left arm. Weinert missed the Supercross series because of an arm injury, the 250 National Championship series with a shoulder separation, and will now miss a few rounds of the 500 National Championship. Weinert had to lie on the track for over an hour waiting for the ambulance. Most of the pain came from having to listen to Jody tell jokes and old racing stories. The arm will heal, but the brain will probably rot after that experience.

* * * *

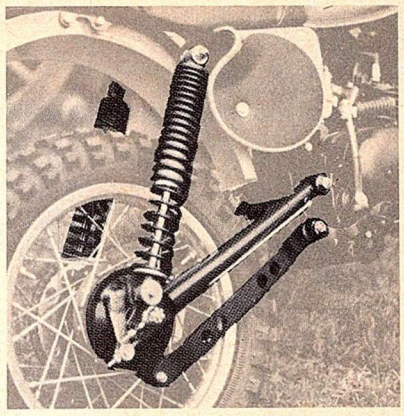
CANADIAN 500 GRAND PRIX

The week after the USGP at Carlsbad the traveling GP circuit was at St. Gabriel De Brandon, Quebec, for the Canadian Grand Prix. The results were the same. Heikki Mikkola went 1-3 to win overall, with Brad Lackey second with a 3-2 score. Suzuki teammates Wolsink and DeCoster were third and fourth. Only 16 riders made the appearance at the GP, as most of the Americans opted to prepare their 500 equipment for upcoming National races. Mikkola's points lead is now 205 to Wolsink's 157. DeCoster has slipped to third, one point behind Wolsink and 49 points ahead of Brad Lackey in fourth.

* * * *

MR. PIBB TO SPONSOR 500 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

The Coca-Cola Bottling Company has announced that it will add $6000 to the 500 National Championship as bonus money. Mr. Pibb should not be confused with Dr. Pepper, although



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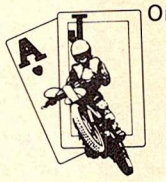

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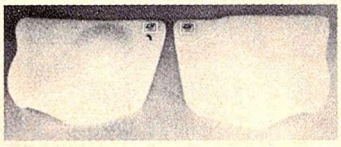

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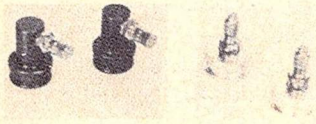

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Dirt

Tony D. insists on calling it Dr. Pibb. It is the sign of good things to come when Coca-Cola and Mr. Pibb begin to invest their advertising dollars in motocross.

* * * *

DIPRETE DEMOTED

AMA Professional Motocross Manager Mike DePirte was upset that Dick Miller labeled him as National Motocross Referee in a recent Mainjet article. Tex Myers is actually the Motocross Referee. Depree was not extremely upset about the whole issue, but Mick did say, "I don't care what you call me as long as you spell my name right." Mike Dupree is a heck of a good guy.

* * * *

RIDERS IN UPROAR

The proposed 1978 National Championship that would name one National Motocross Champ from a combined 250-500 schedule has gone over with the 125 National riders like a lead balloon. Yamaha team rider Broc Glover said, "Next year was going to be my year in the 125 class. Now the AMA is trying to put me out of work." In effect the new program would make all Support classes open to 125 equipment, but there would be no 125 National Champion.

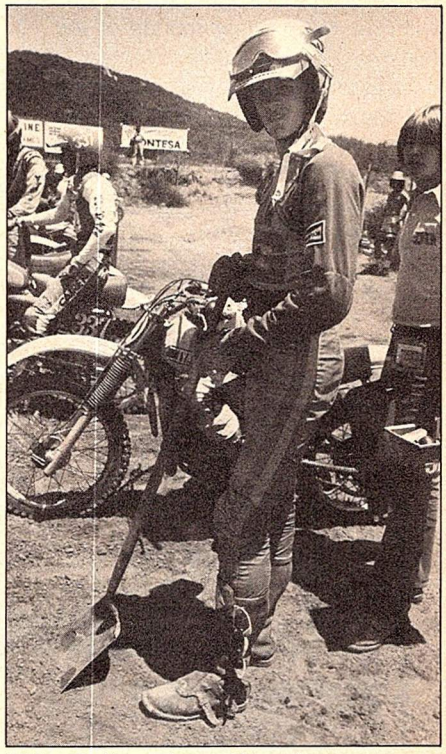
The AMA wants everyone to ride 250 or Open class equipment, while the 125 riders want everyone to ride 125, 250 and Open class equipment. The battle rages on at this moment over the life or death of the 125 class.

* * * *

SUPERCROSS MODIFICATION

The AMA Professional Motocross Manager, Mike DiPrete, has proposed several changes in next year's Supercross Series. The Consolation event will be cut back from 15 to eight laps and the winner will transfer into the final event. This will increase the main event field from 24 to 25 and give all the riders an additional shot at making the main. Also proposed is a method of paying Super Series points to the first three places in the qualifying motos. All these proposals must be approved first, but then Mike will set to work on a plan to get more money paid farther down the field.

* * * *



Mike Bell — Team Yamaha.

MIKE BELL SIGNS WITH YAMAHA

Yamaha announced that they have recently signed Mike Bell to a factory contract. Many American motocross fans have never heard of Mike Bell, but in Southern California his name means victory. Bell has totally dominated local SoCal racing to a greater extent than any other rider, including Bob Hannah, Marty Smith, Tommy Croft, Gaylon Mosier and Radical Ron Turner. At one time this season Bell had won 23 out of 24 motos.

Mike Bell will see limited action in the Support classes at the 500 Nationals this year and then take a shot at the Trans-AMA Support class title. At six-foot-three, the former Team DG rider is someone worth watching. Mike is also the current National Four-Stroke Champion.

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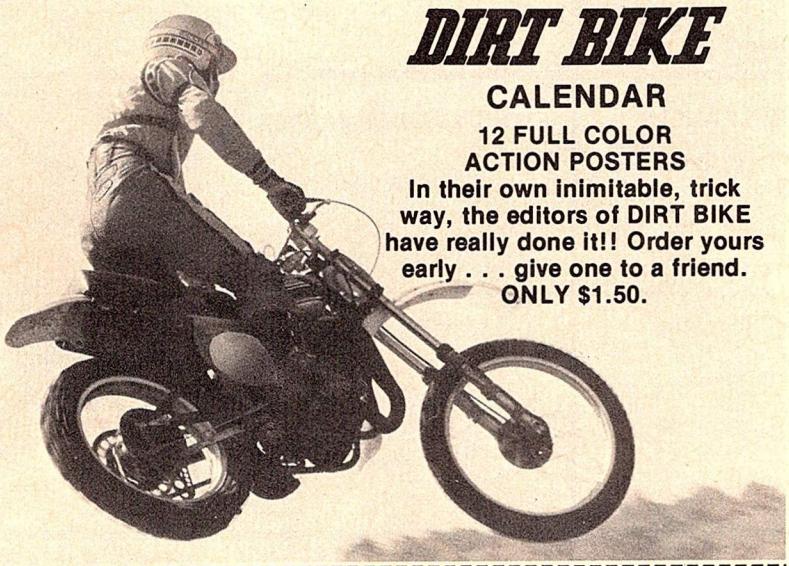

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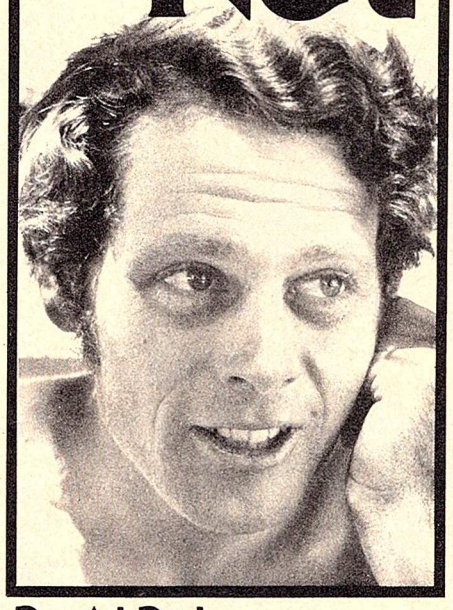
Wing Nut



By Al Baker

'75 KX250

What would be the best shocks for my '75 KX250 — Works Performance, Gas Girling or Fox Shox with dual-rate Fox springs and remote reservoirs? Fox Airshox are too costly for me. Also, what is the best fork kit I could buy? Remember, I'm not rich. Are Protopipe exhaust systems worth buying?

Doug Bush
Mt. Washington, Kentucky

I think the best performing and *most economical shocks for your KX are S&W's new 14-1/4-inch "L"-series Freon shocks and 11-inch 70-pound springs. Terry Industries in Hesperia, California, make an eight-inch-travel fork-improver kit for your '75 model. If you're questioning the Protopipe high pipe, it's worth buying because they're the only one I know of who make one for your bike.*

"IRREGULAR MX GEAR"

I wear a size 8½ EEEE boot and I was wondering if anybody made that size boot for MX. I need all the information you can give me. I was also wondering if the JT Unleathers come in a 30-inch to 32-inch waist and 27 or 28 inseam. Please answer this because I need all the help I can get. Thank you very much.

Larry Thomas
Santee, California

I don't believe JT Unleathers are available in your size, although I know Bill Walters will custom-make a pair for you at no extra cost. He's located in North Hollywood, California, and is there daily. Your quest for quadruple "E" boots is going to be almost impossible. My suggestion is that you try on all the different boots available at all your local dealers and find the pair that's closest to fitting you. Then take them to a good shoe repair shop and ask them to soak the boots in water for a couple of days and put a shoe expander in until they dry to your size.

CRASHED AND BURNT

A while back, I was racing my friend on my Suzuki TM100. I was coming into a fast fifth-gear straight and then into some bumps. My shocks didn't like what was going on, so they kicked me over the handlebars, and into the nearest hospital.

After I get out of intensive care, and peel my bike off of the tree down at the track, I wonder what I can do to my bike to get the suspension up to par with the other bikes on the track. I've got an old article that shows how to lay down the shocks, and replace them with a pair of 13½-inch S&W Kawasaki Z-1 shocks with four inches of travel and S&W 95-125-pound progressive-wound springs. It also says to install S&W full-length progressive-wound springs with four ounces of ATF in each fork leg. The only reason I didn't go ahead and do it is because the article I have is from a different magazine, and I thought that I should ask a second opinion from a magazine that I could trust. I'd appreciate any help you could give me. Thanks!

Steve Triano
Redwood City, California

P.S The article is for a TM125. This won't make a difference, will it?

These modifications you've mentioned will definitely make a handling improvement. It sounds like you desperately need it, too. May I suggest — if you're going to be gassing it and your buddies have newer bikes, keep in mind that their new suspension designs are far superior to yours. No major modification could ever make your TM work like the new RM Suzukis.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

This holiday season be good to yourself, and your friend(s).
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Mail Entries

YOUR BROTHER DID WHAT?

Dear MXA:

My mom used to think your mag was trash and I was wasting my money on it, but I stuck your July issue in front of her nose and she can't put it down and now she's going to buy me a subscription. Keep up the good work! Please print this because my brother who's a nerd doesn't think you will. The bimbo recently switched from motocross to golf. Need I say more?

Carry Herrera
Santa Paula, California

EATS IT UP

Dear MXA:

After having been a motorcycle dealer from 1970-1976 in South Georgia, it's still great to read your magazine. Being out of the business has only served to whet my appetite for it. Ever since I've been out of the business, never has a month passed that I didn't eagerly grab up one of your magazines at the first opportunity. "Ah, for the good old days!" Keep up the good work, especially what's new and trick. You're still on top.

Respectfully,
Ward Gibbons

ZOOT SUIT

Dear MXA:

Perfection. MOTOCROSS ACTION, you're the best. Each issue improves one way or another. I can't wait for the arrival of each month's issue. I liked the tests and the coverage of the NMA Mini Grand Prix in your July issue. But what kind of clown suit is Jim Pomeroy wearing on page 35?

Joe Hendrickson
Louisville, Kentucky

WANTS TO RACE

Dear MXA:

My name is Tommy Mattheisen. I am 12 years old. I was wondering if there was motocross for Honda 50s? I got one and I was hoping I could get into a race somewhere around Kalispell, Montana.

Tommy Mattheisen
Kalispell, Montana

(At most races five riders constitute a class, so all you have to do, Tommy, is find four other berserkos with 50s.)

ASKING FOR IT?

Dear MXA:

I subscribe to MXA and have found the motorcycle I want, but there is only one problem. I don't know the motorcycle manufacturer's address. The motorcycle I want is the AJS. I beg of you to send me the address of the motorcycle company that makes the AJS.

Jeff Evans
Winona, Mississippi

STYLING FOR DOLLARS

Dear MXA:

On page 46 of your July '77 issue, in the test about the Yamaha YZ400, could you tell me where I could get my hands on the outfit the test rider is wearing (leathers, jersey, gloves)? He looks sano and I'm in sad need of some new equipment. Thanks a million!

Clayton Clabaugh
Leander, Texas

(Write to J.T. Racing, 303 W. 35th St., Suite D, National City, California 92050.)

SERIOUSLY OPEN

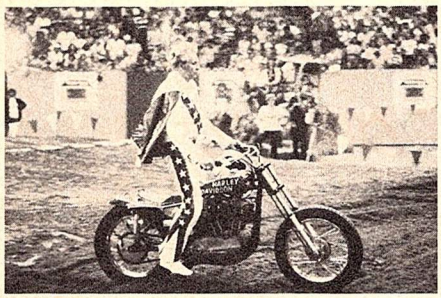
Dear MXA:

I recently purchased a BMW R100S, and I have converted it into a super-trick open class MXer. After a very successful season racing a 900 Kawasaki last year I figured the extra 100cc would really give me the winning edge, but I just haven't been doing as well as I had expected. I did all the trick modifications such as putting a windshield wiper on the fairing, welding a cross-bar to the handlebars, cutting the mufflers, putting a J.C. Dimwit

knobby on the back and slapping a Bel-Ray sticker on the tank. Can you at MXA, with all your vast experience, think of any other mods I might do?

I.M. Puzzled
Cowville, New York

(Hey, Puz, didn't you know that Gold Wings were the bike this year in the open class.)



HEADS UP, EVEL

Dear MXA:

Evel Knievel once said that if anybody ever saw him ride without a helmet, he would give them $1000. Enclosed is a photograph of Evel without his helmet. I took it at the Superdome in New Orleans. I don't know how to get in touch with him but maybe you could help me get my money. Besides, I need it to get a new YZ250 which I need very badly. Thanks for the help.

Richard Guy
Bogalusa, Louisiana

READER LASHES OUT AT LARRY

Dear MXA:

Your sissy art director goofed again. He put Al Baker's Wing Nut on pages 14 and 15 and wrote continued on page 67 and it was continued on page 64. Better tell him to get his false eyelashes replaced or get off the MOTOCROSS ACTION staff.

Mike McKay
Parkersburg, West Virginia

SHAPE UP

Dear MXA:

In your April issue Jody Weisel says you don't have to be in shape to ride motocross. Hogwash! As far as I'm concerned he doesn't know what he's talking about.

Somewhere on the East Coast

(That's never stopped Jody before.)

HAVING A TOUGH TIME FINDING . . . ?

Hey guys,

I live in _____ (town or city), and I can't get MOTOCROSS ACTION. . . . at my local dealer, _____ (dealer name and address).

Please get these guys on the ball!

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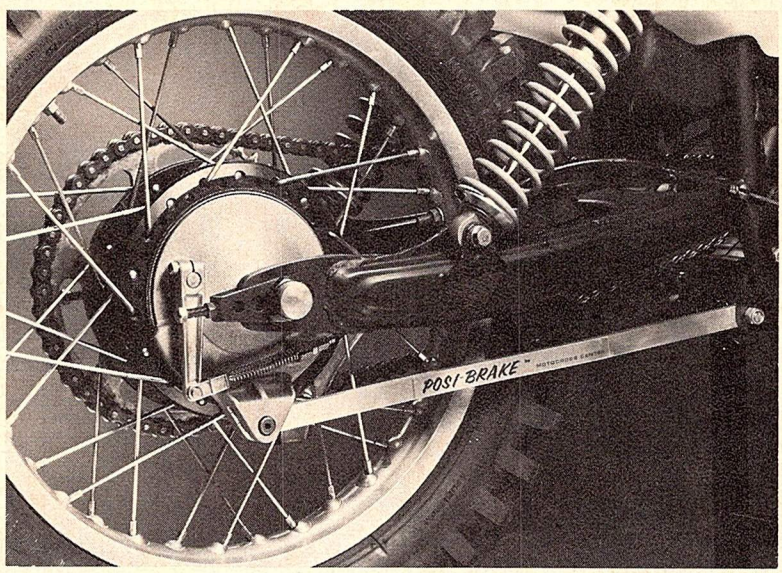

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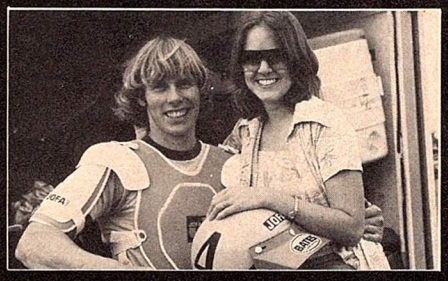
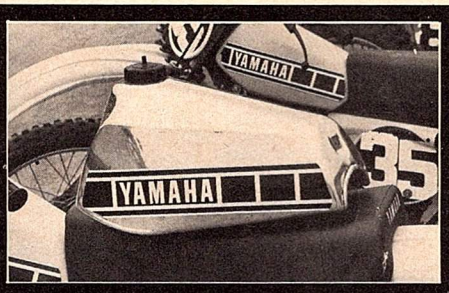


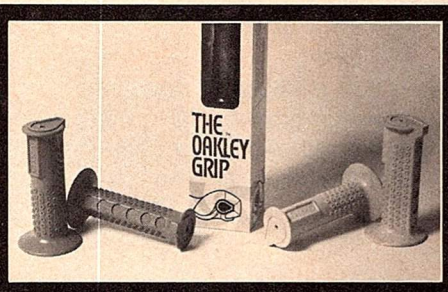
MARITAL PROTECTION

"Hi, I'm Kent Howerton. I'm a married man now and I've given some thought to protection while I've been on the National motocross circuit. I use Jofa protective motocross gear, shoulder pads, rock guard, and yes, even a goody guard. You should too. After all, you'll probably get married some day, and who wants to DNF on their wedding night? See your local dealer. The wife you save may be your own."



SHINE IT

Polish off the last of your life's savings on this spiffy looking aluminum gas tank for your YZ. Guaranteed to get ohhs and ahhs from envious "I'd rather buy a cheeseburger" riders. The tank comes complete with aluminum gas cap and Yamaha decal. It's a real dazzler and hand-crafted by the fine folks at GPS. For more information contact DG Performance, 1170 Van Horne, Anaheim, California 92806. Tell them you saw it in MXA.

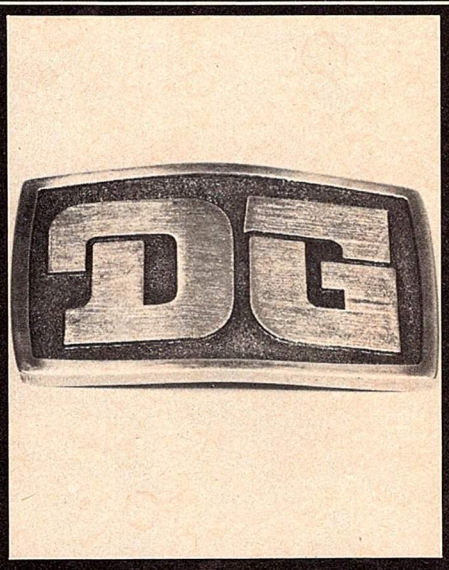


ANNIE GET YOUR GUN

Get a grip on yourself or your handlebars with this cam-shaped grip from Rocky Cycles. The Oakley cam-profile grip conforms to the bends in the knuckles and is supposed to increase grip and decrease fatigue. The Octopus tread pattern of tacky rubber creates optimum traction, and when was the last time you had that? Available from Rocky Cycle Company through your local dealer in red, yellow, black and blue.

PONG O-CROSS

Sport of the future? Can't you just see Marty, Tony, Bob, Jody and Jimmy sitting down in front of the tube roosting each other on the screen? Could be, with Atari's new Stunt Cycle video game. You'd have to let Evel in on it, though, as a bus-jumping variation lets you work up from a paltry eight buses to a chilling 32. Stunt Cycle features on-screen digital scoring, and real motor and crash sounds. The waffle grips will have to go; slip on some Ourys. The game also has a Pro-Am switch for those in doubt. Only $72.95. For more info contact Atari Inc., Dept. MXA, 1265 Borregas Ave., P.O. Box 9027, Sunnyvale, California 94086; (408) 745-2202.



PEWTER CINCH

Have you had trouble keeping your pants up? Not that this problem is widespread, but should it rear its ugly head in your family, it can only bring embarrassment. Flashers Anonymous was formed for people like yourself. If you get that reckless urge to drop your pants, then you need the new anti-flasher from DG Performance Specialties. It has kept Gary Harlow out of trouble for years. This snazzy pewter belt buckle attaches to your belt and keeps you from doing anything rash. It sells for $7.95, but isn't peace of mind worth it? Write to Flashers Anonymous, Dept. MXA, 5552 LaPalma Ave. East, Anaheim, California 92806.

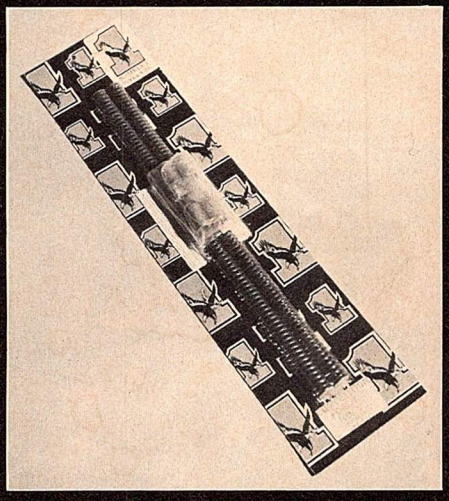
give your "best friend" freedom with complete safety
dog trolley
40' of "caution yellow" tangle free, vinyl-coated aircraft cable
plus spring loaded shock absorber.

IT'S A DOG'S LIFE

If you happen to be like most of us, you probably have a dog that you like to take to the races. Be it machine or animal, you should keep it on a leash while you're there to avoid embarrassing doggie death should "Old Rover" decide to wander onto the track. The Weil Dog Trolley is designed just for such circumstances. It comes with 40 feet of plastic-coated cable (colored "caution yellow" so bumbling friends won't walk into it) and, get this, has a "shock absorbing spring" attached to it so when "Old Rover" gets to the end of his rope it won't be the end of his neck. Available at leading dealers, or if your dealer's back in the pack, contact Weil Products Corporation, Dept. MXA, 2434 W. Fletcher Street, Chicago, Illinois 60618. Model DT-3 goes for $12.95 postpaid.

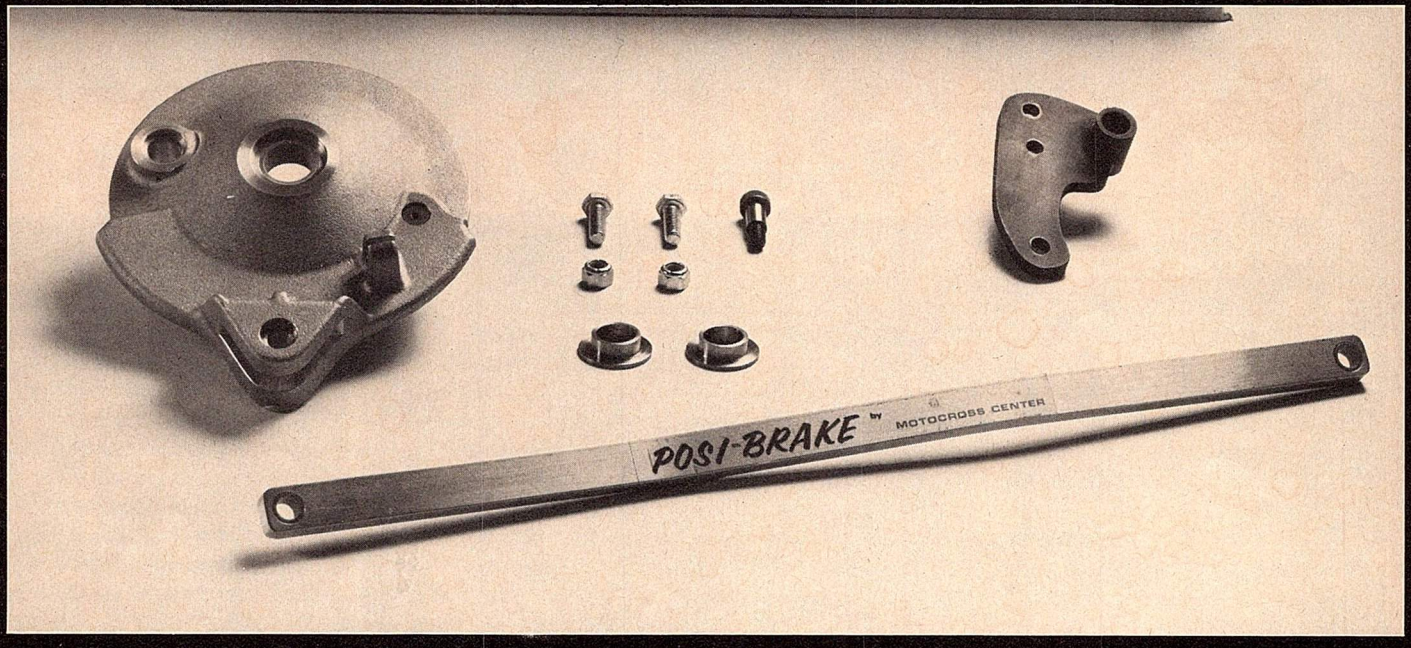
EASY STRIPER

Territorial imperative being what it is, this handy paint striper could be just what you need for keeping stray gorillas out of your pits. Just slip an aerosol paint can in and press the trigger. WHAM! Instant starting line. Amuse the highway department by adding your own lane to the races. The Easy Striper lists for $99.95, with a case of Traffic Paint going for $49. For more info contact Fox Valley Marking Systems, Dept. MXA, 31W300 West Bartlett Road, Bartlett, Illinois 60103; (312) 697-5590.



PHORK FIX

Been doing a little too much soil-sampling, and you're not even a geologist? The folks at Number One Products have developed a new, improved fork modification kit for the Honda XR75 and Yamaha YZ80. The kit contains new valving plus fork springs to make your mini more competitive. Ask your dealer for the new M2 Fork Modification Kit. Don't forget to mention to your dad that you saw this in MXA. Thanx.



BOOGIE BRAKE

Say you're boogying down Get-Off Hill, only to apply your binders and have the bike start doing its own version of shake your body. What should you do? Well, you could enter your bike in the Fred Astaire dance school, or you could try Ginger Rogers' Full Floating Brake Kit from Motocross Center. The full floating brake separates the braking forces from the suspension movement, which in turn eliminates rear wheel hop. Cost is $99.50, and the kit comes complete with backing plate, tie-rod, bushings and front anchor plate. For more information contact Motocross Center, Dept. MXA, 643 E. Arques Ave., Sunnyvale, California 94086.

Motocross Fox T

If it's Tuesday it must be Alfa

By Geoff Fox

☐ In January plans began to take shape for a European trip to catch some Grand Prix MX-ing. The purpose of this second annual trip would be twofold. First, to check the action early in the season to see if any new technical trends were evident. Second, to establish business contacts among European manufacturers while enjoying World Championship racing. The 500cc class seemed to be the logical choice this year. Pomeroy would be staying in the U.S.A., so no American was scheduled to ride 250 GPs (although later Ossa decided to bring Marty Moates to Europe). Nor was an American scheduled to contest 125 GPs. In the 500cc class, however, there were two Americans: Brad Lackey on his new Honda ride and Pierre Karsmakers back with Yamaha. Moreover, the 500cc class promised to offer the most dazzling competition ever seen in Grand Prix racing. My pre-season evaluation placed Roger DeCoster on top as the favorite, with Gerrit Wolsink and Heikki Mikkola very evenly matched right behind Roger. Another notch down I expected to find Brad Lackey, Graham Noyce and Pierre Karsmakers fighting for it. But any of these six riders could win on any day. This was the kind of racing that has never been seen before. Usually only two or three riders are actually scrambling for the top spot, but this year six excellent performers looked hot and ready to win. And to make the action even more exciting, a pack of aces — Adolf Weil, Bengt Aberg, Willi Bauer, Jaak van Velthoven, Herbert Schmitz, Ake Jonsson and Hakan Andersson — were out there. In order to see the most racing in the least time span, you must examine the schedule closely to avoid the threat of non-racing weekends during the trip. Fortunately, this year the second, third and fourth rounds were to be consecutive. Racing during the month of May would be in Holland, Sweden and Finland. These three 500cc GP races would give a good sample of what the year had in store.

hrough Europe

IMPRESSIONS OF THE TRACKS AND THE RACING

Holland: May 8, 1977.

The GP track at Norg is super-long. It penetrates through thick woods over a sandy surface. Lap times are over three minutes. The start-finish area is set up at the edge of the woods in a huge soccer field of lush turf. The riders are concerned that the winding track is too narrow and dangerous. Lackey, DeCoster and Wolsink install specially modified gas tanks to insure against running out of gas on this power-sapping sand course. Most other riders have larger than stock tanks also. Two riders ran out of gas on the last lap, including Dutch sand ace Peter Herlings who was running fifth on his Maico. In the second moto he takes no chances and makes a stop for extra gas during the moto.

In the first moto Brad and Roger pull the holeshot, Heikki enters the first turn in sixth place . . . and exits it leading! In the second moto Brad again gets a good start but falls in the first turn. Lackey comes from behind on this track that riders admit is extremely tough to pass on, and finishes fourth. This is the first startling proof of just how much better the top riders are than the rest. In Sweden Mikkola will display his skill at coming from the back and in Finland it will be DeCoster's turn.

Sweden: May 15, 1977.

All Swedish tracks are permanent tracks that are used continuously during the racing season. This race is in the hills above the village of Alfa near Bollnas, about five hours northwest of Stockholm. The course is sandy and wet due to the late spring in Sweden, which is causing much flooding. Loads of wood chips and sawdust were shoveled into the low, soggy spots. The track is good by our standards, although the Europeans feel it is too easy for a GP course.

Heikki Mikkola proves that at present he is head and shoulderpads above the rest. In the first moto Brad grabs the lead from Herbert Schmitz and begins

Motocross Fox Through Europe

to pull away. Heikki has a problem in the first lap and pulls over to straighten out his shift lever. He *starts* the third lap in about 25th position. He *ends* the third lap in 12th position. Two laps later he is in fifth position; DeCoster is in fourth and moving up. It takes Heikki five more laps to catch and pass Noyce and Bauer. Then it takes him five more laps to catch Roger, and one lap to pass him. He is now in second place with Brad in first and four laps to go. He catches Brad, whose inspired riding holds him back to second place. It is the most dazzling display of riding I have ever seen. And during this fantastic ride I never saw Heikki even a little bit out of shape.

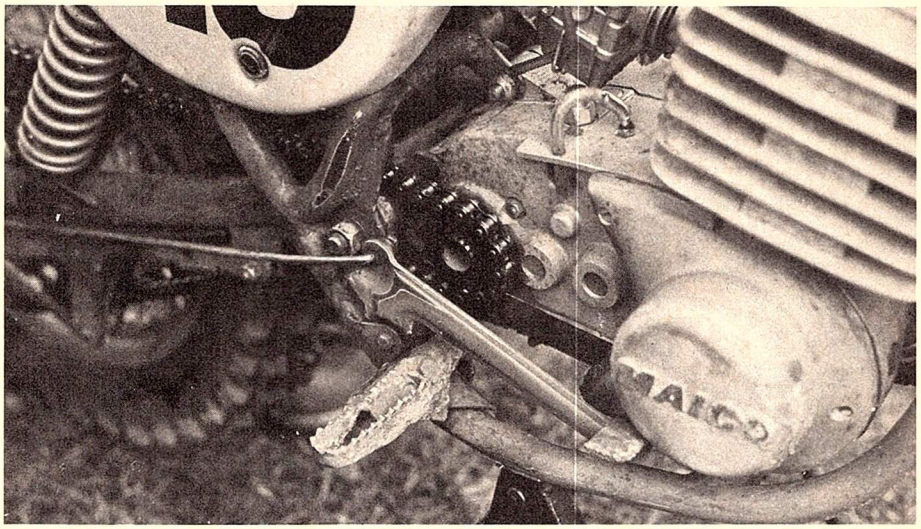
Finland: May 22, 1977.

The course near Helsinki, also a sand track surrounded by woods, is adjacent to the city airport. On Saturday for practice it is hard and dusty, but late Saturday they disk and water the track. Come Sunday the course is soft sand with big whoops. It has a section in back, a super-long starting straight, and is very wide. The riders like it. Heikki Mikkola leads every lap of both motos. His superiority is unreal. Roger DeCoster proves my contention that the top four riders are in a special class by themselves. In the first moto he gets started 30 seconds behind the pack. It takes him 20 minutes to reach 12th place. But he finishes fourth after passing Bauer, van Velthoven and Hakan Andersson in the last six laps.

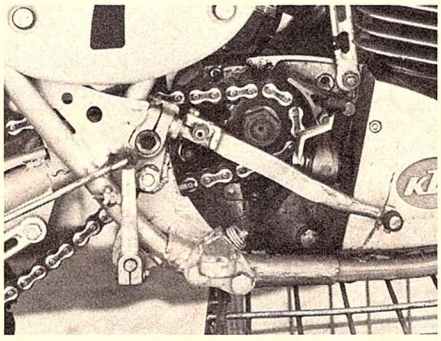
RIDER IMPRESSIONS AFTER THREE GRAND PRIX RACES

Heikki Mikkola (pronounced HEY-KEY MEEK-KOLA) is in an altogether different class from the rest. He won five of the six motos and finished second in the other. He led every lap in these five motos. We know Heikki as the "Wolf," or the "Fierce Finn." These nicknames don't do Heikki Mikkola justice. He is in superb physical condition and is an intense competitor. But the most impressive things about him are his smoothness and his lines. Heikki takes lines that no one else knows about. In six motos I never saw him even a little bit sideways. He does things with the motorcycle that I have never seen before. Steve Whitelock, Lackey's mechanic, sums up the feelings of most pit people when he says, "Heikki

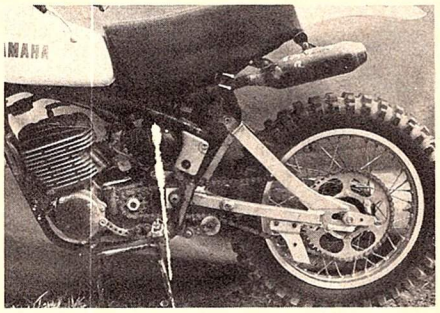
Continued on page 67



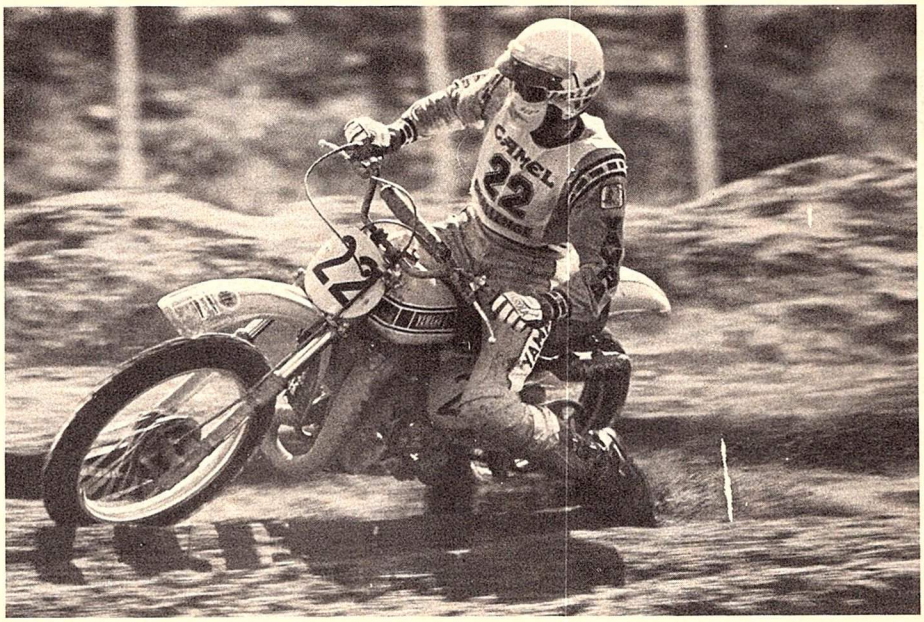
Graham Noyce's Maico has had the countershaft moved back closer to the swingarm pivot. Stock Maicos have the shaft exiting out of the plugged hole about three inches in front of Noyce's.



Jaak van Velthoven's KTM features right-side shifting. That long shift lever is for Jaak's feet. The brake arm remains on this side but is attached to a cross-over.



Mikkola's all-conquering Yamaha in stripped-down form shows the aluminum swingarm, aluminum-bodied monoshock, roller chain tensioner, drilled shift lever and Metzeler rear tire.



Almost-American Pierre Karsmakers took his revolving Yamaha ride across the Finnish countryside for an 8-4, placing Pierre in sixth in the Championship standings.

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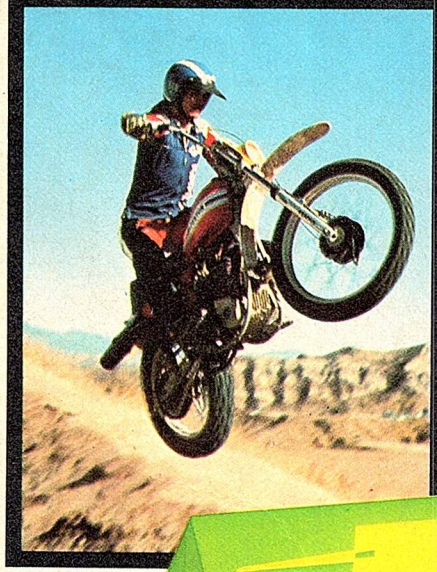

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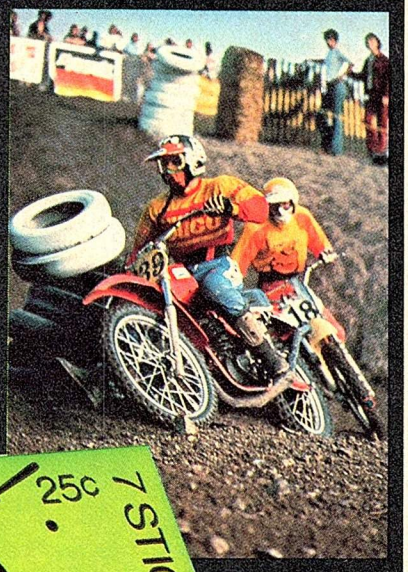

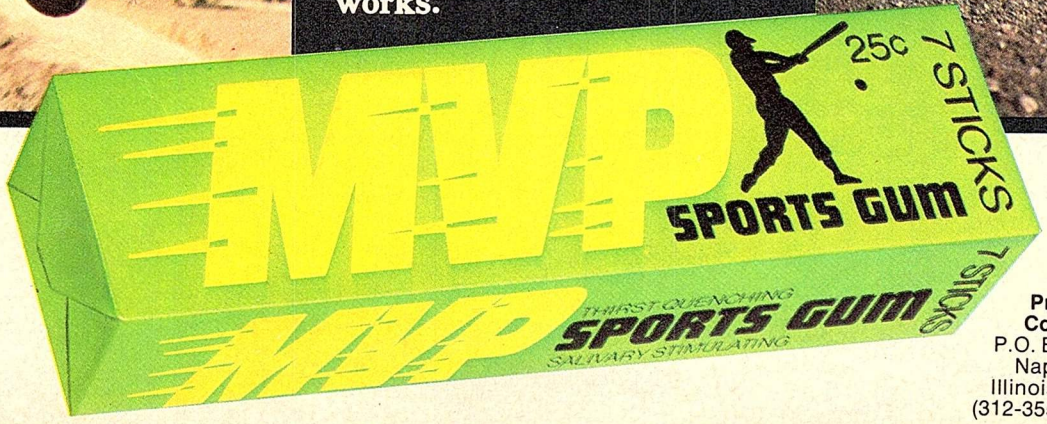

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COMPETITION

MARTY MOTORS SUPERDOME

Racing in the world's largest fishbowl

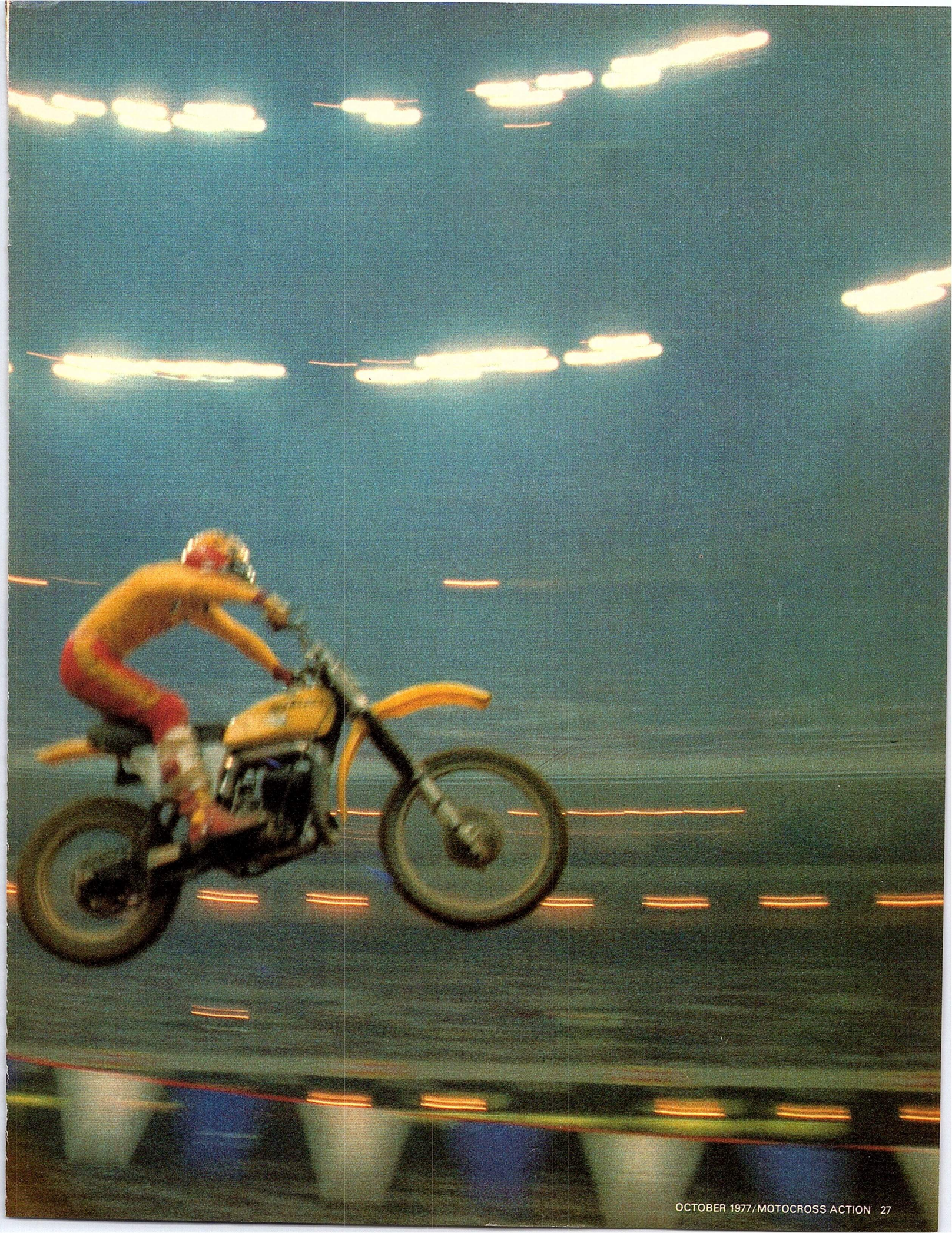
By Jim Gianatsis

☐ For Marty Smith the New Orleans Supercross was nothing more than a grudge race. Since the 1977 racing season began both Bob Hannah and Tony DiStefano had been burying Marty's front number plate with roosted dirt, and the kid from San Diego wasn't liking it. The only races Marty had won were the 250cc Nationals at Hangtown and Southwick, and at Hangtown Tony beat him in the final moto while Bob had his own problems in the 125cc National class that day. Every other weekend Marty had taken a sound thrashing from his two competitors, as Bob pulled out a nearly uncatchable lead in the Supercross Series, and then just the weekend before New Orleans, Tony beat Marty at the final 250cc National of the year to give Tony his third consecutive Championship.

This was the first year for the Popeye's Fried Chicken-sponsored event, and nearly 45,000 fans packed their way into the air-conditioned New Orleans Superdome for Saturday night's race in the world's largest enclosed stadium. The Superdome had originally been scheduled for two nights of racing, but after the success of the single-evening Atlanta Supercross earlier in the season, New Orleans promoter Rookie Leopold wisely decided to change his race to a single evening as well. It certainly proved easier on all those involved, from the riders and mechanics to the people running the show.

With a usable floor space 40-percent larger than the Houston Astrodome, the plan at New Orleans was to design a technically difficult track which would reward riding skill, and hopefully allow more passing than at the other stadium motocrosses. As the evening turned out, though, all the riders proved to be too good in skill, and the track too narrow to allow any real passing. The riders liked the track's composition, which was mostly sand, designed so the surface would get rougher during the race, and perhaps a simpler and wider course like Houston would make the racing at New Orleans more exciting next year.

For this year's race, though, announcer Larry Huffman kept the fans excited and up on their feet yelling with his hyper-vocal antics. The four ten-lap qualifying motos provided probably the best racing of the evening because the riders involved were less well-matched



SUPERDOME

than they would be later in the Feature.

Marty began showing his determination early in the evening as he pulled the lead in the first qualifier over Terry Clark, Tony D., Roger Brown, Rich Eierstedt and Hannah. Bob was handicapped with a sprained ankle he had gotten the week before from playing around and falling off a basketball goalpost. His instructions at New Orleans from Yamaha team manager Kenny Clark were to ride as safe a race as possible so as not to aggravate the injured ankle, but to do well enough to maintain his strong points lead in the Supercross Series. Tony D. passed Clark after the first lap and quickly reeled in on Smith, taking over the lead of the qualifier when Marty dropped his Honda at the halfway point. Marty remounted quickly enough to latch onto Tony as he went by and chased him all the way to the finish. Eierstedt and Hannah got around Brown to fill up the top five positions transferring to the Feature.

The most exciting bash of the evening went down in the second qualifier as Team Suzuki's Jeff Jennings and Kojii Masuda pulled the holeshot, only to lose it by the second lap when the Japanese champ bailed and Jeff had his lead taken away by Kent Howerton, with Jim Pomeroy slipping by for second spot. Jeff continued to hold on to his third place, even when he nailed a number of haybales in a tight turn and had to struggle to free the front end of his RH250. Gary Semics was running in fourth, trying to hold off the persistent advances of Mickey Boone, John Ayers and Chuck Sun, when Gary rammed in behind Jeff, who was trying to free his bike from the haybales. The whole group soon piled in behind as Jeff finally freed his bike and disappeared down the track with his third place secure and everyone else as mad as hell. Up front, Jim Pomeroy chased the "Rhinestone Cowboy" all the way to the finish line, pulling within two feet of Kent as they crossed the line. Jennings was penalized a lap for jumping the start, which moved Semics, Boone and Sun into the top five. Both Jennings and Masuda would get into the Feature later in the evening by way of the saving grace of the semifinal.

Jimmy Ellis disappeared with first place in the third qualifying moto as the battle over second place became a knock-down, drag-out fight. Kenny Zahrt stalled his Bultaco in a tight turn to let Steve Stackable into second spot, but it wouldn't be for long, as Honda's Tommy Croft was just completing one of the few charges of the evening from the back of the pack and began tangling handlebars with "Short Stack's" Maico. Tommy's persistence finally paid off with second behind Ellis, leaving Stackable in third ahead of Zahrt and Terry Owens.

Reigning Supercross Champ Jimmy Weinert used his factory Kawasaki to hold off the advances of Texan Steve Wise the entire distance of the fourth and final qualifier. Rickey Burgett thought he had third sewn up, only to have a berm break out beneath his Yamaha and send him off the track. Gaylon Mosier and Danny LaPorte, who had been involved in a first-turn crash and worked up, got around Little Rick, but the "Lumberjack" repassed them both to regain his lost spot before the finish — proving how fast he can go when he feels like it.

THE FEATURE

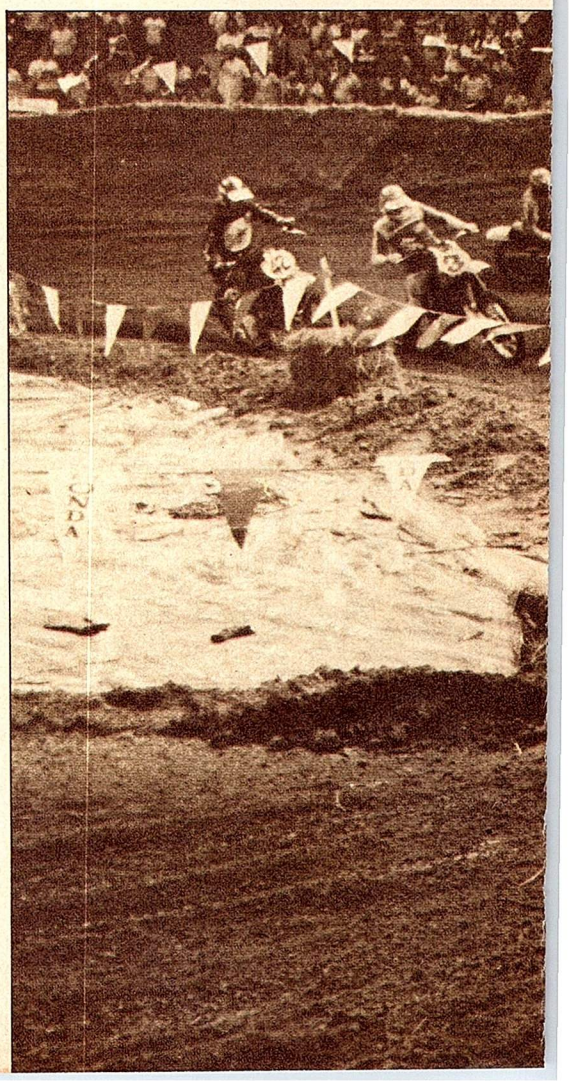
With the qualifiers having served their purpose of picking out the top 24 riders, the Feature race would be a 20-lap dash to glory with a $25,000 purse as the reward. The start would be critical, because with the riders nearer to being equal and the track difficult to pass on, getting the holeshot would mean everything. For Marty Smith, getting his RC Honda off the line quickly meant more than keeping up the payments on his new Porsche Turbo Carerra. It would mean finally beating Hannah and DiStefano.

When the Feature kicked open the gate Marty was in a good position to start making his car payments. Bob Hannah regained his first-of-the-season starting technique, which he seemed to have lost during the Nationals, and put his OW 25 works Yamaha with production YZ suspension out front ahead of Smith, Wise, Ellis, Stackable, Mosier, DiStefano, Pomeroy, Weinert and Howerton. Two crashes in turn one put Masuda, Burgett, Sun, LaPorte, Clark and Eierstedt out of contention for a high finish.

Before the first lap ended, Marty had reeled in the "Hurricane" and taken over the lead. Marty passed Bob and quickly began pulling away, breaking the lap record almost every lap right up to the checkered flag. It wasn't much of a race as everyone freight-trained around the track, but announcer Huffman had the spectators on their feet and cheering every inch of the way as he clamored on about the possibilities of Marty crashing from his furious pace or Bob Hannah catching back up.

The only changes of position weren't due to passing, but to get-offs, usually at low speed on some of the trickier sections of the course. Steve Wise bailed off three times and saw his third place deteriorate to tenth. Tony D. stepped off in a sandy section, recovered in 12th, and then managed to move up just three positions during the 15 minutes remaining in the race.

The crowd went wild as Marty took his third win of the year. Later, in the pits beneath the stadium bleachers, after all the champagne-popping, trophy-presenting and speechmaking were over, a very happy Marty Smith was walking past the Suzuki pits where Tony D. was packing up his riding gear. The tension between them from



the past ten weeks of Nationals was finally over and they could kid around again.

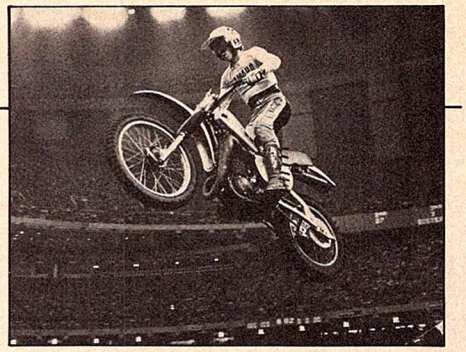
"Did you get the holeshot?" joked Tony.

"Of course. That's the only way you could win out there," smiled Marty.

RESULTS

1.	Marty Smith	Honda
2.	Bob Hannah	Yamaha
3.	Jimmy Ellis	Can-Am
4.	Tommy Croft	Honda
5.	Jimmy Weinert	Kawasaki
6.	Jim Pomeroy	Honda
7.	Kent Howerton	Husqvarna
8.	Mickey Boone	Suzuki
9.	Tony DiStefano	Suzuki
10.	Steve Wise	Suzuki
11.	Gaylon Mosier	Maico
12.	Chuck Sun	Husqvarna
13.	Rich Eierstedt	Bultaco
14.	Steve Stackable	Maico
15.	Terry Clark	Kawasaki
16.	Rick Burgett	Yamaha
17.	Gary Semics	Kawasaki
18.	Glen Johnson	Suzuki
19.	Terry Owen	Can-Am
20.	Jeff Jennings	Suzuki

Marty Smith talks to teammate and friend Tommy Croft. 1977 has seen Marty blossom into an all-around threat in any class.



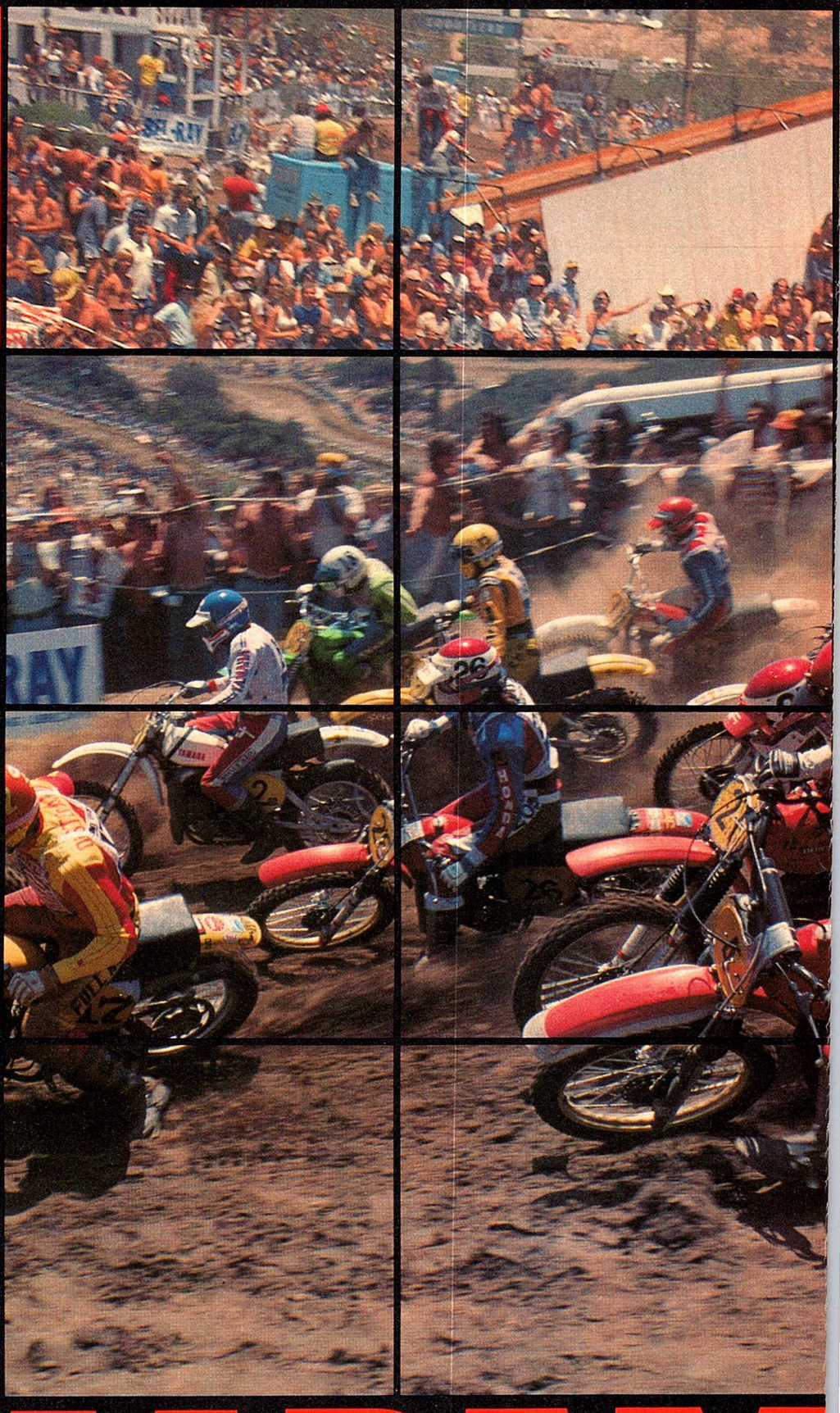
Hannah is perhaps the most relaxed and supple rider on the circuit. Bob doesn't fight the flow.

RC Hondas have 11 inches of front wheel travel. Marty has less than an inch left.

Ellis' Can-Am looks so good sitting still, so scary going fast, and so controllable under Jimmy.

On the wide, sweeping Superdome sand track Marty Smith starts to pull away from Steve Wise (12) and Bob Hannah (2).

BEL-RAY UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX



Roger DeCoster has been the most gracious and charming ambassador that any sport could have, but at the United States Grand Prix his luck turned sour. For the five-time World Champion it was a frustrating day from start to finish. For American 500 National Champion Kent Howerton (15) it was also a dismal day.

"I AM DAM

Photograph By John Rocha

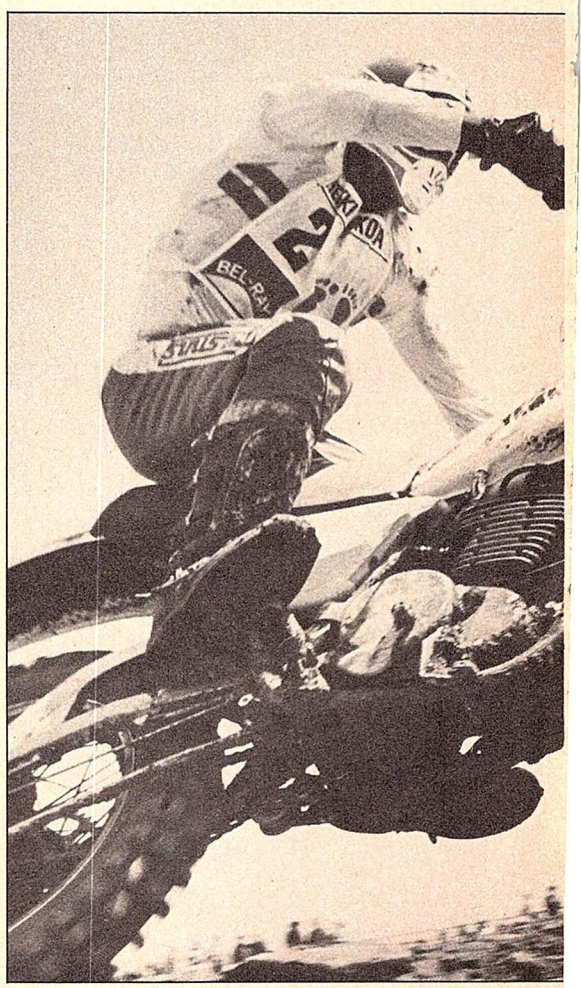
NED HERE"

Story Begins On Next Page

"I AM DAM

The front line of the style wars

By Jody Weisel



☐ Roger DeCoster flew into Los Angeles International Airport to be greeted by a reception committee composed of ABC television cameras, journalists, Suzuki public relations people, his beautiful wife and a hired limousine. When Heikki Mikkola flew into L.A. International he was met by a Yamaha mechanic who tossed his stuff in the back of a van. Five-time World Champion Roger DeCoster drove home to his house in the hills of Santa Barbara, while Heikki bedded down in a motel south of Los Angeles. Roger drove down to the Bel-Ray United States Grand Prix in his sleek Mercedes 450 SL. Heikki borrowed a van and pulled in behind Roger. The USGP was going to be a confrontation in style.

Style is what Roger DeCoster has. Gerrit Wolsink says, "Even if Roger loses he is still the Champion." Speaking five languages and looking good doesn't hurt either. But this has not been Roger's year. The World Championship has been slipping away in 1977. The USGP was to be the turning point of the season or the end of it. For DeCoster it was do or die.

Heikki's style has always been written about in terms of his fearlessness and fierceness, but this doesn't come close to summing up his well-thought-out and controlled riding style. Heikki is a worthy adversary for DeCoster. Mikkola has won both the 500cc World title and the 250 title. His quiet and aloof Finnish upbringing have made Heikki, the Wolf, a mystery man.

Other people came from Europe to race on the Carlsbad course, but the eyes of the sun-drenched American crowd rested only on the two prime protagonists. Gerrit Wolsink had won the USGP three straight years in a row. He was in third place in the World standings. To bet against Wolsink at Carlsbad is like being married to Zsa Zsa Gabor; you might be lucky enough to win, but the odds are against you. Brad Lackey has been coming on stronger in Europe this year than ever before. A few DNFs hurt his points total, but he was one of only three men who could run up front in Europe. But Brad had been seriously ill in Italy the week before and his recovery was slow enough to sap his strength in the California sun.

For the Americans Brad was the best bet, but Tony DiStefano had just clinched his third 250 National title two weeks before and was red-hot. Kent Howerton was signed up in the International class this year, after Husky made him run Support last year, and Kent wanted to show what the American 500 Champion could do. Bob Hannah, violating a rule by signing for two events on the same day, opted to race a 125 National in the midwest on this Sunday. Jimmy Weinert did the same thing. Jim Pomeroy was getting his first good shot at racing the USGP. The last time he appeared he was forced to make a second-row start because he was a 250 rider and could earn no World Championship points in the 500 class.

The crowd was down a little from past years, but they had a better time because there was finally some available fence for watching over. The pits became the center of attention most of the day, as spectators crowded up against the fence to see the Europeans in one of their rare visits to America. Least happy of the Europeans was Swedish rider Hakan Andersson. While Roger was being chauffeured around the airport in a limo, Hakan was looking for his suitcase. It was lost. Giving up on the suitcase, he went to direct the unloading of his factory Montesa 360VB, but it also had been lost. Saturday was spent watching practice. His suitcase was discovered first, and then just five hours before the gates opened on the USGP the bike arrived at the airport. Perhaps he should have stayed home, as a flat tire in the first moto and broken brake arm in the second gave him a big goose-egg for the day.

Big John Banks arrived back in the U.S.A. with his potent CCM four-stroke. The Champion Spark Plug

NED HERE"

For DeCoster, the starting line has been his lifeline.

Photographs By Mike Yada

man was going around to all the riders asking if they had enough plugs or needed any jetting advice. When he got to the CCM pits he asked how they were fixed for plugs. A thick British accent replied, "Alright mate, we've got one plug and that should last us until Trans-AMA."

Tony D. was over visiting Jaak van Velthoven and asking about the new addition to the van Velthoven clan. There was no doubt about it, at that moment the two biggest stars in motocross were together. Although Jaak towered over Tony by several inches, Tony still outweighed him by 30 pounds. And Tony is six feet one and 180 pounds and Jaak is six feet, five inches.

Bengt Aberg brought over his strikingly handsome four-stroke Yamaha TT500. It probably drew the biggest crowds in the pits. When asked how much it weighed, the Swedish mechanics would say, "About 230 pounds." But when it was hoisted up on the scales with just a teacup of petrol in it, it came to 252 pounds. It was nothing to be ashamed of, as Mikkola's trick works Yamaha weighed 234 pounds and Pomeroy's rocket-ship Honda was 232 pounds.

POMEROY WINS ONE

The first moto saw the slimmed-down starting field being blown off the track by Jim Pomeroy's Honda. Maico rider Herbert Schmitz hung onto second, but the West German couldn't take the heat or

Heikki argued over the results, but for the money, not the points.

Mr. Tooth drilled them for the fourth straight year. Wolsink deserves his acclaim.

"I AM DAMNED HERE"

pressure and slowly worked his way backwards through the pack. Adolf Weil and Graham Noyce had both canceled their appearance at the USGP because of injuries. They stayed at home to prepare for the circuit's return to Europe. Kent Howerton was third, DeCoster fourth, DiStefano fifth with Mikkola and Wolsink on his tail. The fourth lap was the telltale round as DeCoster moved up into second, Wolsink third and Mikkola fourth. This was how it would end, but it was anything but dull. Pomeroy was ten seconds ahead when DeCoster started to reel him in. RD knew that he could gain a lot of points on Heikki if he won and the flying Finn stayed in fourth. But calculations sometimes go awry, and Roger missed Pomeroy by less than a second at the line. Wolsink was third and Heikki suddenly became the focus of attention. Lackey, Croft and DiStefano were on his tail and jostling for position like World War I fighter pilots. Lackey, tired and weak from his illness, couldn't keep the pressure up, and Croft and Tony D. pounced on by. Heikki had lost first and second gear on his Yamaha. Perhaps if the young Americans had known that, they would have motored by him, but instead they contented themselves with a battle against each other not 50 feet behind the crippled Yamaha. Heikki can make a gearless motocrosser go fast enough that you don't know it's gearless. Mikkola was fourth, Croft fifth, Tony D. sixth and Brad Lackey seventh. Three new RC400 Hondas in the first seven, and Marty Smith brought the fourth Honda in to eighth place. The red machines have a definite advantage.

The track was rough and hard. The edges, ledges and bumps had blown out Kent Howerton's and Hakan Andersson's rear tires, while crunching the wheels of Billy Grossi and Gary Jones.

THE END FOR RD

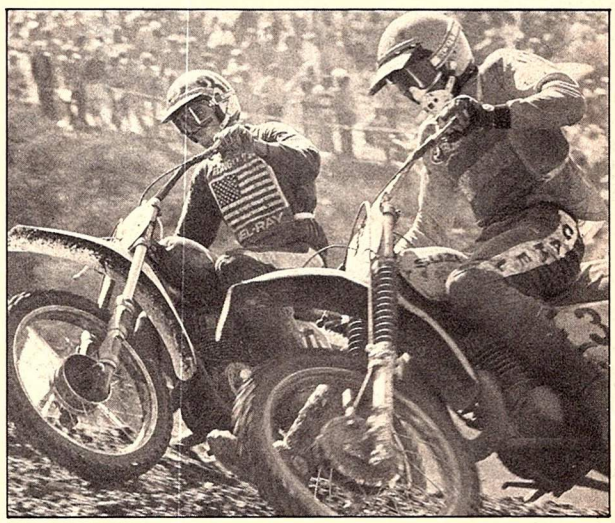
Three major things happened in the second moto: Wolsink crashed in the first corner, got up last and finished in second place to win the overall on time over Heikki Mikkola, who won the moto. Then, Heikki Mikkola protested the win because he wanted his 4-1 score to beat Wolsink's 3-2. In America it would have normally, but playing by European rules the second

Photograph By Mike Yada

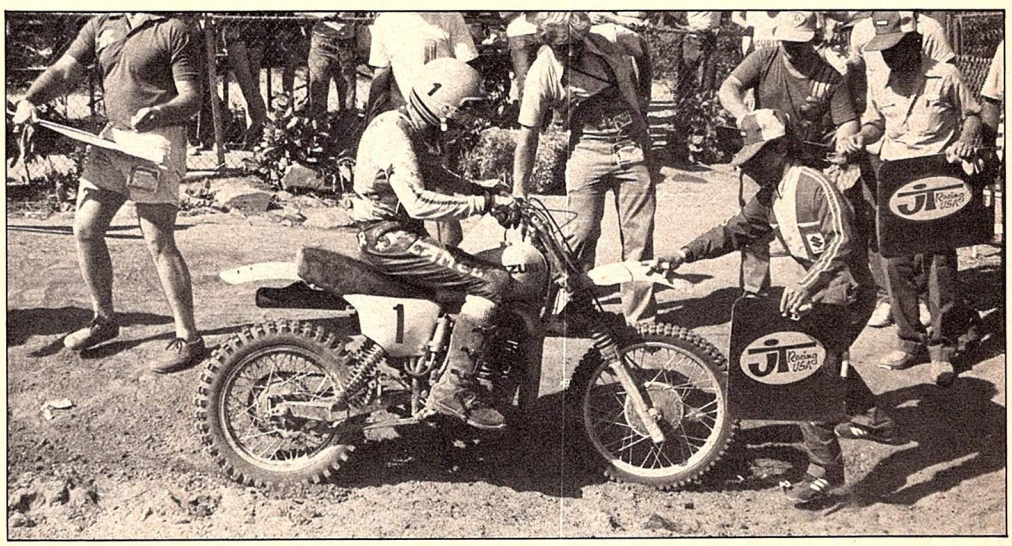
Tony D. blurs away while his roost nails a trio of Hondas — Croft (26), Smith (21) and Lackey (4).

Photograph By Charlie Kloppenburg

Jim Pomeroy kept his string of incredible bad luck going after his first moto win.



Homemade versus handmade — Gary Jones sticks his Jones/Ammex under Wolsink's super Zook.

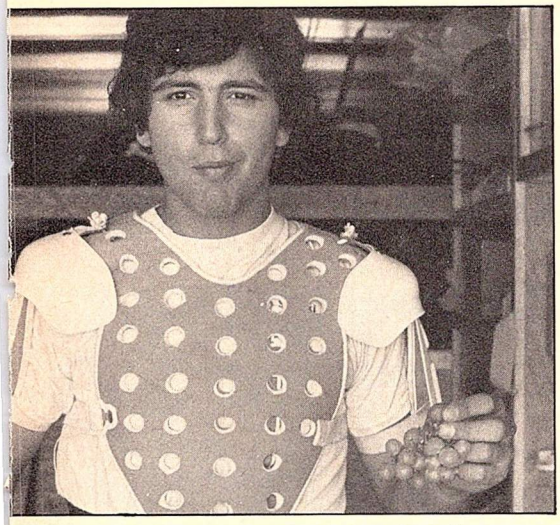


This pit stop was the beginning of the end for Roger. Seconds later he walked away from the Championship.

moto is no more important than the first, and overall championship points don't enter in. All that counts is who finished the two motos in the lowest combined time. Wolsink did that by 15 seconds.

The final event of the third moto was that Roger DeCoster gave up. It hurts to say that Roger let his emotions ruin his chances for the 1977 title, but it is true. DeCoster threw away his shot at the title at Carlsbad.

The events leading up to the DeCoster incident are based on Roger's previous years of bad luck at the USGP. Each year he looks like a winner and each year something goes wrong. For even the strongest of men, especially one in the midst of a tough battle, that sort of frame of mind is



Tony D. got new bikes, but Roger and Gerrit got newer ones. Grapes helped him finish sixth overall.

Gaylon Mosier hit the vertical ledge like it was his home track. Oh yeah, it was his home track!

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"I AM DAMNED HERE"

destructive. Brad Lackey grabbed the lead with DeCoster in a solid second. With both Wolsink and Pomeroy lying on the ground in the first corner, Roger was virtually assured of the overall win. It would have been his first since the opening round in Austria. Roger pursued Lackey with his normal tight determination. Lackey didn't give an inch, because there weren't many of those between himself and Roger, but Brad lost it momentarily on a tricky hill section. Roger couldn't avoid the downed Honda and the two riders ended up in a heap. While they were lying there Heikki Mikkola cruised by into the lead. Roger was up quickly, but his fork legs were tweaked. He pulled into the mechanics' area and sat on the bike while his mechanics tried to decipher what was wrong. In the three seconds it took them to see the problem and get to work on it Roger had exploded. If they had jumped on the fork legs and twisted them back into shape, he probably would have kept going to win the race overall. Instead, he stepped off the bike and walked away from it. The mechanics had it fixed before sixth place came by, but Roger refused to remount it.

"I am damned here!" he said while Laurie pleaded with him to go back into the race and finish it. "I am not in the business to finish races. I'm in the business to win them," he said and with that he stood up and walked down the pit row. Roger's mechanic threw his pit board into the ground and stomped off. The bike was leaned against the fence and left until after the moto.

For Roger it was a human thing to do. To finally get angry about the bad luck that has plagued him this year. For a professional motocross racer it was a foolish thing to do and allowed Mikkola to pull out an impossible-to-catch lead in the points race.

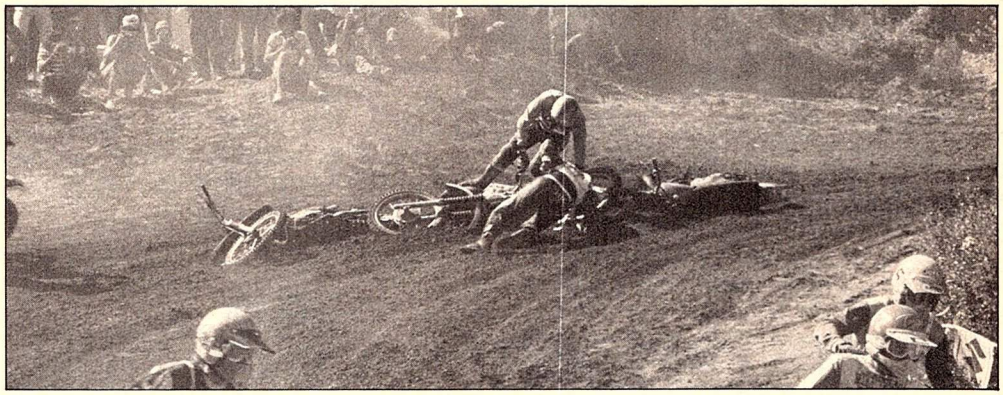
Enough cannot be said about Gerrit Wolsink. He got up in last place and pursued the pack as if he had designed the real estate he was flying over. Later, on the big downhill he would crash again. Wolsink kept on pushing, and with a lap to go he was in third behind Gassin' Gaylon Mosier. Mosier's lead was big enough to hold, but the young Huntington Beach rider got unnerved and spun out with three turns to go. Wolsink was by in a flash to finish second overall. Heikki got

OVERALL FINISH POSITIONS

Pos.	Name, home	Machine	Motos
1.	Gerrit Wolsink, Holland	Suzuki	3-2
2.	Heikki Mikkola, Finland	Yamaha	4-1
3.	Brad Lackey, Pinole, CA	Honda	7-4
4.	Tommy Croft, San Diego, CA	Honda	5-6
5.	Gaylon Mosier, Huntington Beach, CA	Maico	10-3
6.	Tony DiStefano, Morrisville, PA	Suzuki	6-7
7.	Herbert Schmitz, West Germany	Maico	9-5
8.	Jaak van Velthoven, Belgium	KTM	11-9
9.	Rex Staten, Fontana, CA	Harley-Davidson	13-12
10.	Rich Eierstedt, Tustin, CA	Bultaco	16-11
11.	Jim Pomeroy, Yakima, WA	Honda	1-DNF
12.	Rick Burgett, Sandy, OR	Yamaha	14-14
13.	Roger DeCoster, Belgium	Suzuki	2-DNF
14.	Wayne Boyer, Poway, CA	Yamaha	17-13
15.	Terry Clark, Palmdale, CA	Kawasaki	15-18

UNOFFICIAL 1977 WORLD 500cc MOTOCROSS SERIES STANDINGS

Pos.	Name	Machine	Points
1.	Heikki Mikkola, Finland	Yamaha	180
2.	Roger DeCoster, Belgium	Suzuki	136
3.	Gerrit Wolsink, Netherlands	Suzuki	136
4.	Brad Lackey, Pinole, CA	Honda	85
5.	Herbert Schmitz, West Germany	Maico	46
6.	Jaak van Velthoven, Belgium	KTM	39
7.	Graham Noyce, Great Britain	Maico	32
8.	Pierre Karsmakers, Mission Viejo, CA	Yamaha	28
9.	Hakan Andersson, Sweden	Montesa	26
10.	Willi Bauer, West Germany	KTM	24



Wolsink and Pomeroy went down in the first turn and Herr Doktor Wolsink finished second in this moto.

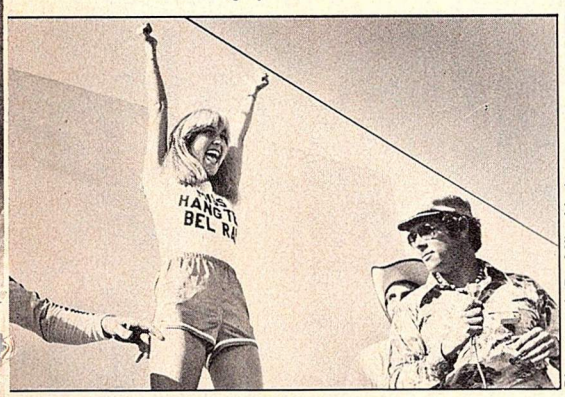
Photograph By Charlie Kloppenburg

John Banks' (13) big-banger CCM was something else. Big John teaches Californian Tommy Croft how to surf.

Yamaha's next superstar is tall, lanky Mike Bell (339). Bell demolished the 250 Support class. Scott Gillman (205) was fifth.

more points, but Gerrit got the win and the kiss.

The USGP was over. Bel-Ray had sponsored a successful event; a battle of styles between two champions. As the track emptied of spectators, Roger was composed. He signed autographs and joked with fans. His friends were still his friends. For Heikki it was a good day and he smiled, but still he smiled alone as he loaded his van. Heikki saw the crowd over by Roger and then averted his gaze. Perhaps more than anything Heikki wants to have DeCoster's style off the track. And when you see the Finn smile, you somehow feel he will ride the wheels off a wheelbarrow to get a chance to be a nice guy.



Photograph By Mike Yada

Does Miss Bel-Ray like motocross? Does Larry Huffman like Miss Bel-Ray? What is Gerrit pointing at?

The big 400 Hondas are the fastest and best-suspended bikes on the track. Brad Lackey demonstrates.

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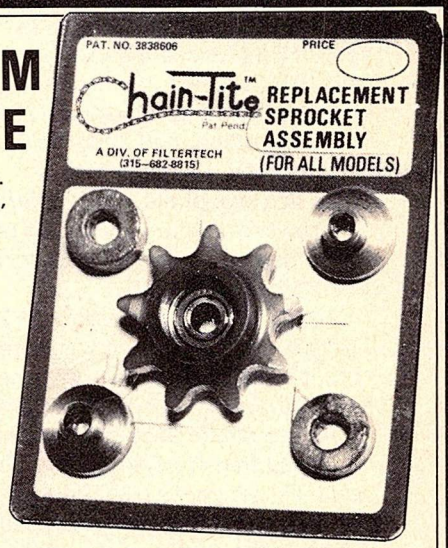

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RACE TEST

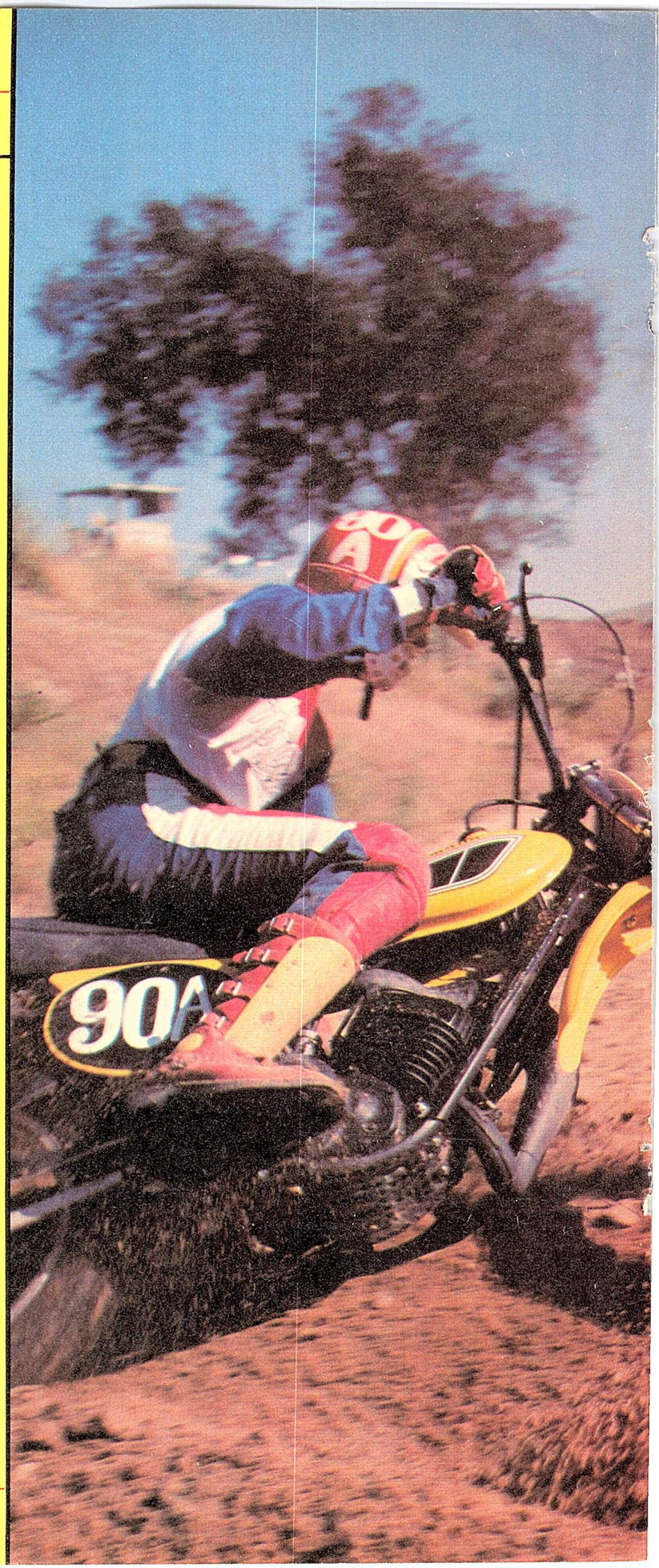
☐ How did you start racing? If you began by riding a full-blown 400cc Piston Chucker, you were the exception. Most of us started out with either mini-bikes or the next step up, the tiddler 100s. The 100 class used to be much more popular than it is now, as most riders today tend to bypass the 100s for the more popular and sophisticated 125s. An overabundance of hot 125s from almost all the manufacturers has left the 100 class as an afterthought by the major motorcycle manufacturers.

The 100 class has always been considered the beginner class, and if there ever was such a thing as the beginner class, this should be it. The size, weight and handling are much more attuned to the smaller bodies of most young, beginning riders. Put Junior on a 100 so he can see how the bigger bikes feel, but won't have to handle the bigness that today's new-generation suspensions have evolved to. A bike where a rider can learn the basics of riding, throttle control, weight transfer, cornering; all these things can be more readily understood on a lighter, less powerful bike.

Competition being what it is, though, the 100 class is developing and changing from foo-foo get-around bikes to multi-thousand-dollar one-off Hodakas and exotic ISDT Zundapps. The West German team used the tiny tiddlers to take the Six Days in both 1975 and 1976, winning the motocross special tests over a sizable field including 125s. However, that's in Europe, and Zundapp hasn't released a competitive bike over here.

On this side of the Atlantic there are only two choices with regard to both popularity and performance. They are the Suzuki RM100B and Yamaha's YZ100D.

Yamaha's '77 version of the YZ100 is the D-model, and outside of a new decal on the tank it remains basically the same as last year's C-model. The heart of the little pooper is the two-stroke 98cc mill connected to the six-speed transmission. Porting remains the same as last year's bike, as does the transmission. Why change a good thing? Frame is the double-cradle, tubular steel type. Carburetion is taken care of by a 30mm Mikuni that comes jetted with a #190 main jet. The wheelbase is a short 54 inches, which contributes to the nimble cornering of the perky 100. The Yamaha weighed in at 190 pounds, exactly the same as the RM100B Suzuki. Handlebars, footpegs and seat were all comfortable except for the taller riders. The feeling of riding a small bike is still there and takes some getting used to if you've come off



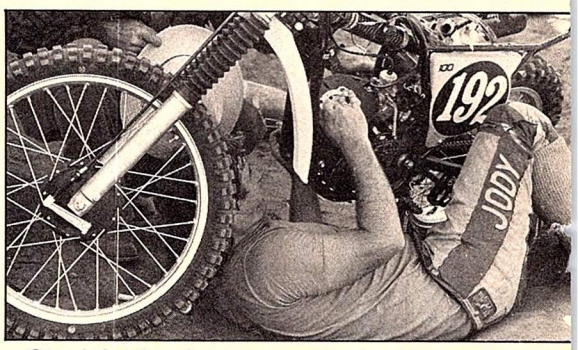
YAMAHA YZ100D

**Remember last year?
Yamaha did.**

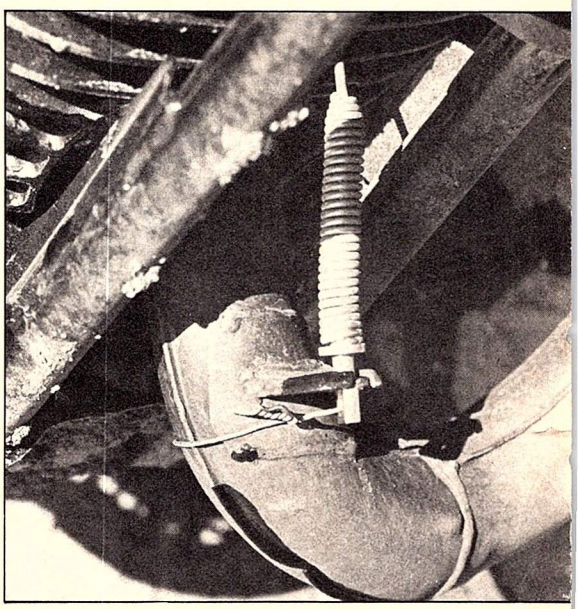
There is only one way to ride the hundreds, and that is hard. You're either wide-open or you're stopped dead in your tracks.

YAMAHA YZ100D

Never shut off in a corner or the peaky little devil will leave you bogged.



Stock jetting is a guaranteed seizure if you run the engine hard. Jody investigates the new ring/piston fusion method he invented.



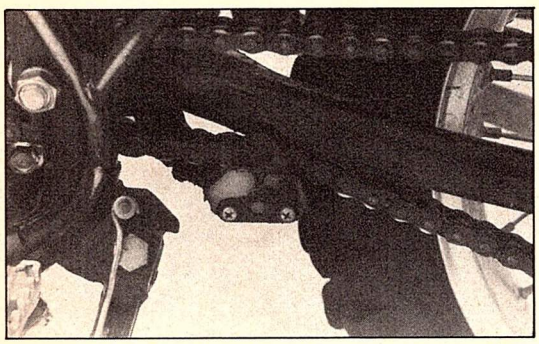
Safety-wiring the exhaust pipe is a first-class necessity.

of riding bigger scoots, but this should not be a problem for smaller riders.

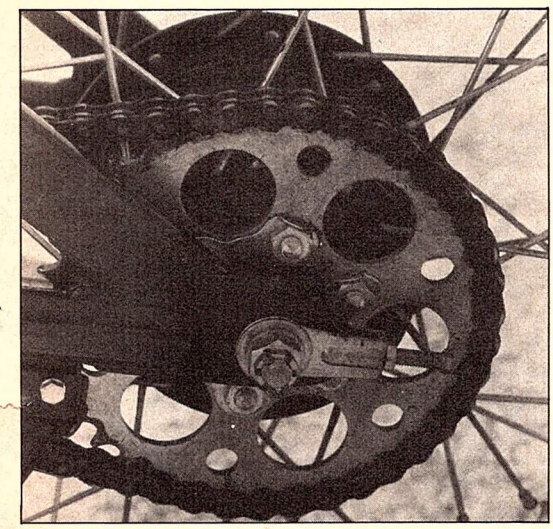
WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

In a straight-out drag race the Yamaha would smoke the RM, pulling the Zook by as much as five lengths in 150 yards. Of the two bikes, it is definitely the faster. There are quicker bikes than the Yamaha in the 100 class, but not in stock trim. Your power is only as good as the chassis and suspension that deliver it to the ground, and in this area the Yamaha also shines.

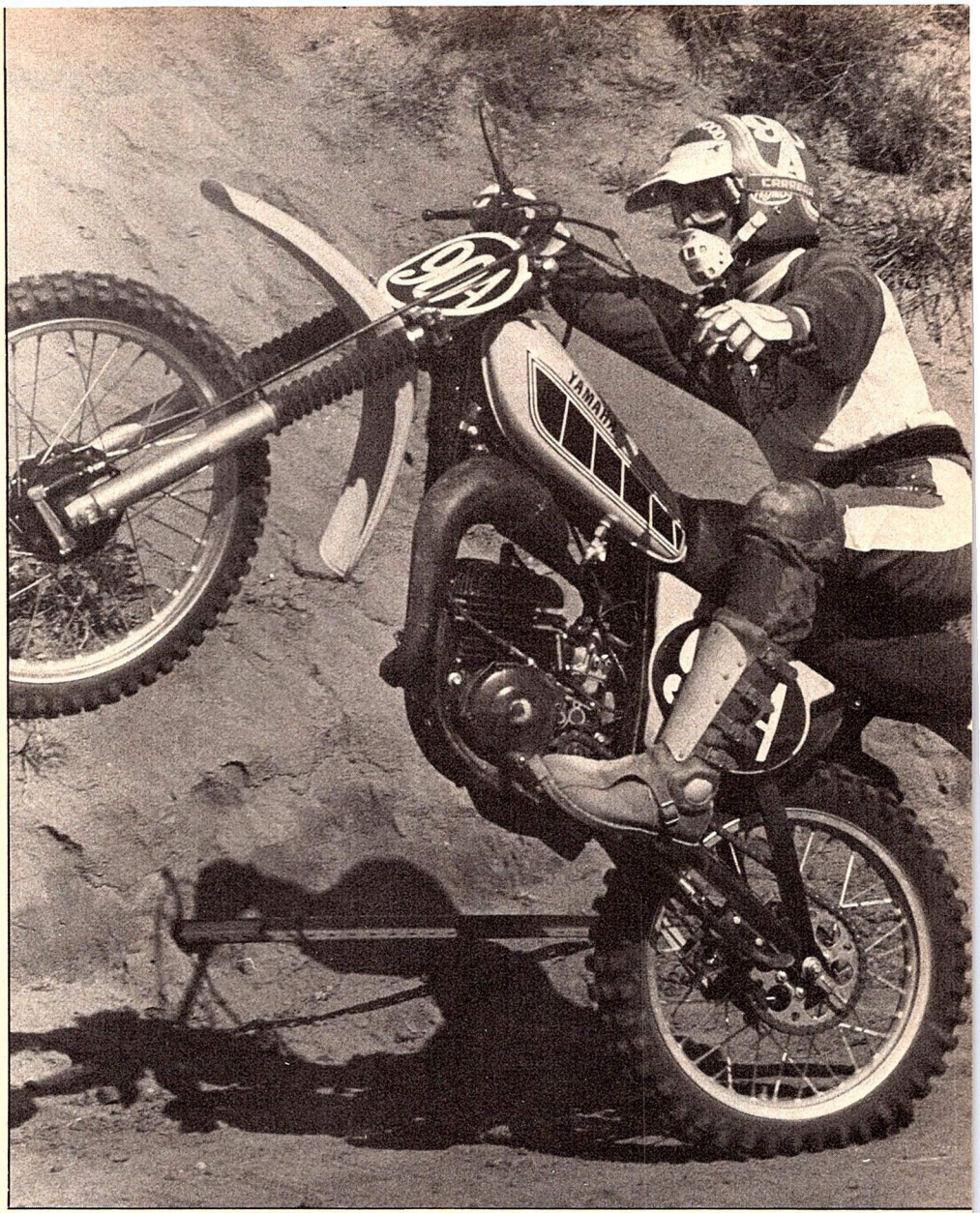
Forks give a good seven and a half inches of travel up front using conventional oil and springs, while the rear monoshock gives six and a half inches of good travel. Sometimes less is more, as six or seven inches of "good" fork or shock travel are better than nine inches of so-so travel. The



Another handy addition this year is a chain tensioner.



The chain adjusters and sprocket nestle up to the old-style rectangular tubing swingarm. The big bikes now have round tubing and a considerable weight savings.



The best racing style is to keep your weight back, the throttle wired and your eyes closed.

monoshock is the old-style nitrogen bladder mono and not the more recent DeCarbon shock as found on the new 125s and larger bikes. It worked quite well, as no one had any complaints about the rear end. The front forks looked suspiciously thin and fragile, but exhibited no noticeable fork flex and worked quite well with good damping.

On the track the Yamaha handles smoothly, with no sudden surprises awaiting the rider. It tracks straight over the bumps and will hold a line through the turns. The powerband is peakier, thus making it harder to ride than a Suzuki. Diligent attention must be paid to the gearbox and powerband, and the proper gear must remain underfoot for the Yamaha rider to get around the track quickly. A deft finger or two on the clutch in the turns helped revving out of the corners. Yamahas have always been noted for good brakes and the 100 is no exception, as the binders are well suited to the size and weight of the bike. The short wheelbase and light weight allow you to pitch it around corners with ease as long as the throttle is kept in the wide-open position. To corner the bike properly, the power has to be on and the engine singing in the right gear — otherwise, you stand the chance of bogging and highsiding the machine.

THIS AND THAT

Jody had the little booger seize on him in the first race, knocking two 100 Expert riders down behind him. The culprit was found to be improper jetting at the factory. The bike came with a #190 main, which was running the bike too lean for its constant high-rpm life, so we switched to a #210 main and had no further problems with piston seizure.

A weld on the shift selector broke. Yamaha was out of stock of that particular item and sent over a substitute part that we could not get to fit, so we rewelded the broken one and had no more trouble.

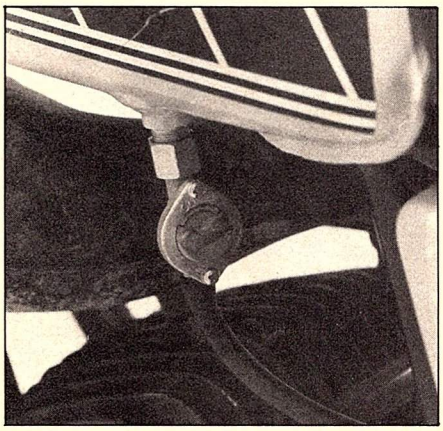
Transmissions this year have been shimmed and seemed to work better than last year's. A 520 chain comes stock and is a nice touch, along with the convenient zerk grease fittings found on the bike. Dual air cleaners are retained from the earlier YZs and would be better left off any new improved models. Spokes never loosened after initial tightening and were no problem. Tank and gas cap are very stylish and are often used on other bikes because they look so boss. Pot metal gas petcock valve broke off.

Right now Yamaha has the fastest stock 100 in that class. Time can change that, and will, if Yamaha is

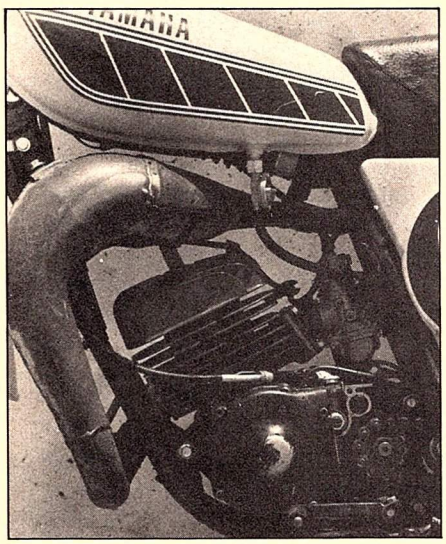
YZ100D

content to stay with last year's design. It may be good enough in the 100 class this year, but Suzuki is already hot on their heels. It won't be long before the other manufacturers catch up. Yamaha's 100 seems to be a full year and a half behind their other production bikes, and unless they update the 100 as they have the rest of their motocross line they stand the chance of having to play catch-up all over again.

The YZ100 engine will mount in the YZ125D frame. There's no reason why it shouldn't be there by next year. And for Yamaha to hold onto its narrow lead in the 100 class, that may be just the step that's necessary and can keep them in the ball game in a class that's sure to get more attention come next year.

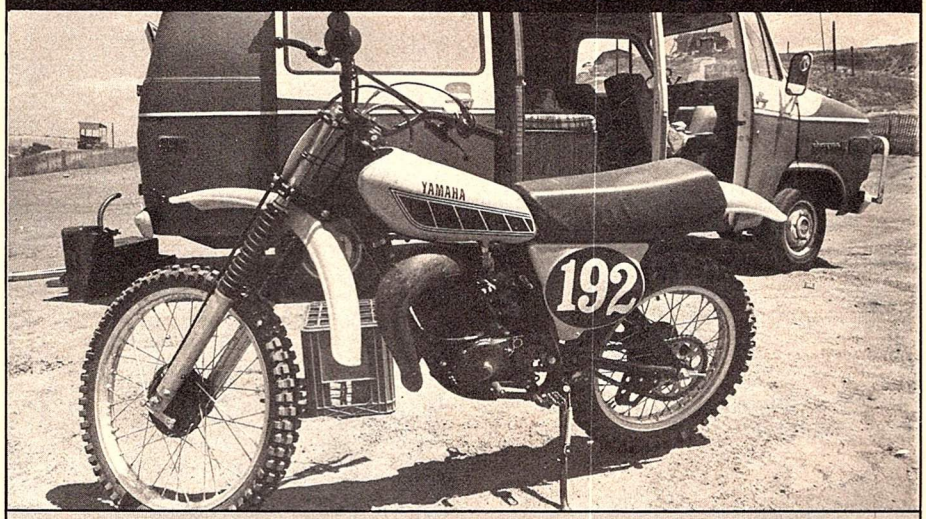


The pot metal gas petcock broke off in our dainty gloved fingers one morning.



Although it is basically the same powerplant as last year, it is still head and shoulders above its competition.

SPECIFICATIONS



SPECIFICATIONS

Make	Yamaha
Model	YZ100D
Country of Manufacture	Japan
Retail Price	N/A

ENGINE

Type	Air-cooled, two-stroke single
Bore & Stroke	50mmx50mm
Displacement	98cc
Compression Ratio	7.2:1
Cylinder	One
Carburetion	30mm Mikuni
Ignition	CDI magneto
Lubrication	Gas-mix 20:1
Air Filter	Dual oiled foam

TRANSMISSION

Type	Six-speed
Ratios	2.538, 1.933, 1.555, 1.300, 1.142, 1.045
Primary	74.19, 3.894
Ratio	3.333
Drive Chain	520 chain and sprocket

SUSPENSION

Front	Telescopic, with oil and springs
Rear	Monoshock with single gas oil shock
Travel	
Front	7.68 inches
Rear	6.30 inches

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase	53.9 inches
Ground Clearance	10.8 inches
Seat Height	34.1 inches
Track Weight	190 pounds
Weight Bias	N/A

CAPACITIES

Fuel	1.5 gallons
Transmission	700cc
Forks	190.5cc 10, 20 or 30-weight fork oil

Gary Ogden does the old pool-room carom off of a steep bank.

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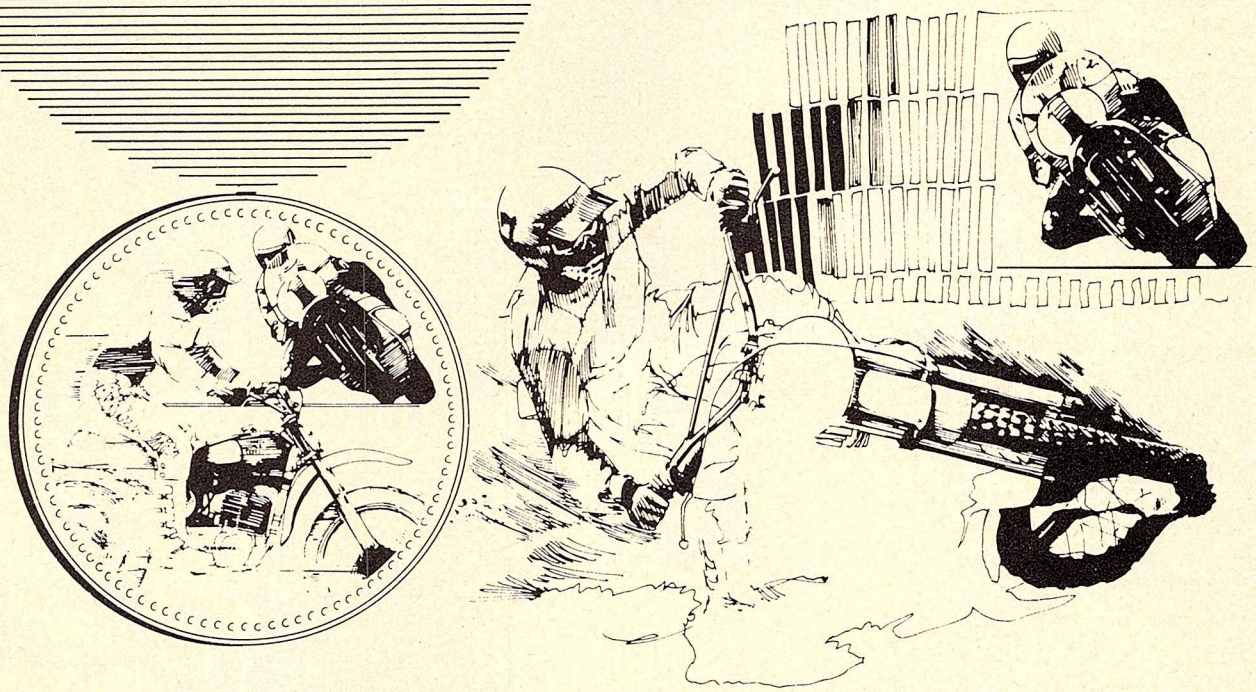

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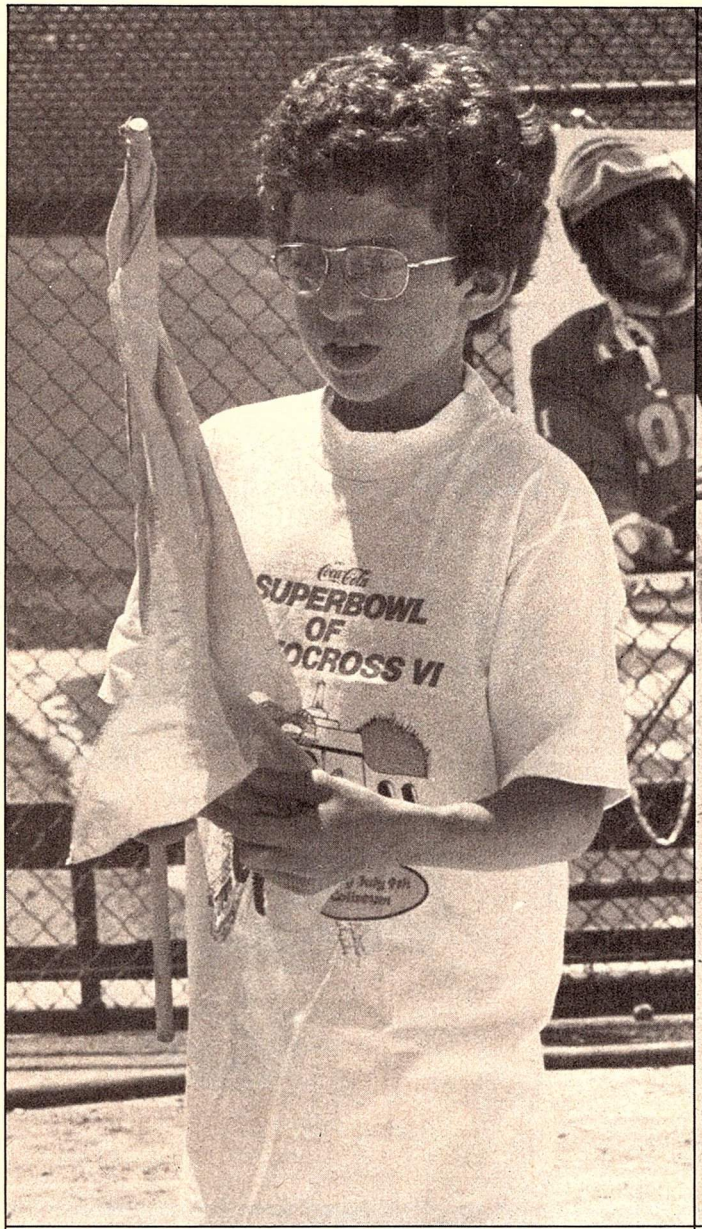
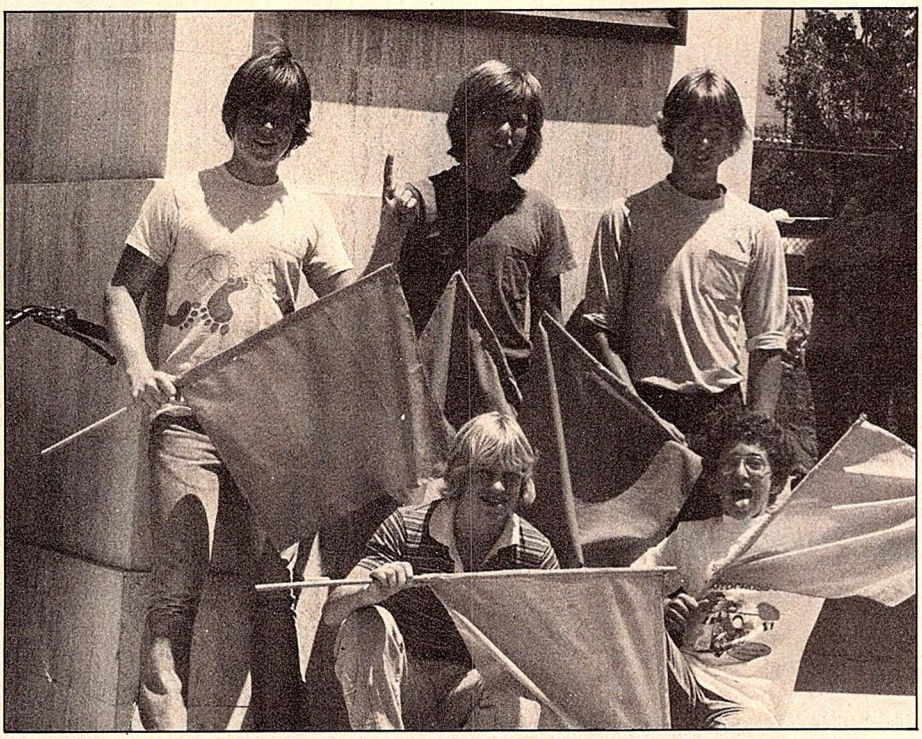


"A lot of people are counting on you out there. It's not easy being the best."

In the middle of the equipment rundown we came upon a bad ankle. Flagging accident? Nope, short track.

FLAGMAN

It's all in the wrist



Would you trust your life to this crew of loonies? The best in the world do.

☐ Jody and Tony D. were down in the pits fiddling with their bikes one afternoon when a voice from behind said, "Hey, sign my flag!" Turning to see who was making all the noise, they looked up, but nobody was there. Looking *down,* they noticed a yellow flag connected to 15-year-old Rob Hassay. Rob is a diminutive under-five-footer who claims the title of the world's best flagman. Whether the title is earned or not, Rob has rung up an impressive series of flag performances at the USGP, Anaheim Stadium. Trans-AMAs and miscellaneous indoor events. Each performance leads to another, making Rob perhaps the best known, if not the best, at his trade.

Flagmen are a forgotten, but integral, part of the American motocross scene. In many cases they are the most important men on the track. In their hands rest the yellow flags used to warn oncoming riders of a dangerous situation ahead. Their coolness in the face of danger and their ability to keep their position and wits about them have saved many a rider from serious injury. Often the only attention they receive is when one of their number makes a mistake or leaves his post. For the vast majority of hard-working flagmen, this is an injustice.

What is the hardest part of the job, we asked Rob. "There is a certain feeling of helplessness when someone stalls on a berm in front of you and you are unable to get in position to warn the riders coming at him. You share with the rider all of his fears in these situations, and it weighs heavily on you. The other hard part is avoiding John Savitski when he kicks the rear end of his bike over to the side on the downhill. He almost takes me off of my haybale every lap," says Rob, as more young flagmen begin to gather around. They start to join in the conversation and you can tell they enjoy their work.

"The funnest part is getting in free," pipes in Adam O'Donnell. This is his first major race and Rob is showing him the ropes. If you are 13 years old like Adam or 15 like Rob, it is hard to come up with the ultra-bucks that promoters are asking for a ticket. For these young motocross fans, being a flagman means getting to see the race, and being part of the action.

"The AMA passed a rule that you have to be 18 to be a flagman. That is a bad rule," says Rob. "They are willing to let us flag practice but not the race. It is a double standard."

"That is a screwed rule," adds a voice from the back.

"You can't say that! This is a family magazine," comes another voice.

"Well it is!" says a third young flagman.

Jody asked Rob how he managed to get all of these influential flagman jobs, even when he is too young. "I know a guy who knows a guy," he says, with the look of a knowing practitioner in the art of getting into the races.

"All you have to have is a flag and a pen so that the stars can sign it," says Rob, who has the flags he used at the USGP and Trans-AMAs at home. "The equipment you need is a set of trick tennis shoes, some ripped Levi's for ventilation and a T-shirt that plugs the race you are flagging at. I wear a Premier Yamaha hat to keep the sun out of my eyes. Normally you can just sit on a haybale, but I took a chair to Carlsbad because I wasn't planning on flagging. But at the last minute they needed an expert flagman. The 18-year-old rule wasn't enforced very well at that race, but then neither was the no beer and wine rule either."

Rob's flag had Tony D.'s signature on it in a prominent place, because Rob's biggest moment was "flagging Tony D. when he went over the berm at the bottom of the big downhill at the United States Grand Prix."

While Rob talks he constantly fiddles with his flag and demonstrates all the moves that have advanced him to the top of his field. He says, "It is all in the wrist. Watch the wrist! You gotta hold it about an inch and a half from the flag. You hold the flag loosely with your index finger so that you can snap it out fast."

While scanning the track with eyes that are skilled at looking for potential crashers, Rob offered this advice to aspiring young flagmen. "Just push! If somebody says you're not old enough, just keep pushing. Hang in there and sooner or later you'll get to flag. The squeaky wheel gets the grease."

Asked about his plans for the future, Rob says that he would like to be 1981 Grand National Champion like Kenny Roberts and Jay Springsteen.

"Motocross is better than that sport," says a voice from the back of the pack.

A unanimous voice rises from the group of gathered flag kids taunting Rob about his flattrack dreams. A couple of flags are swung in mock battle and the five kids go running off with flags to get Jimmy Ellis' autograph. Just another day in the life of a flagman.

COMPETITION

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN MOTOCROSS

High Times at Mammoth

By Dennis Cox

☐ Have you ever daydreamed, as you were heading out to Blue Grove Raceway, of having your own private motocross track nestled amongst rolling hills and sweet-smelling pines? Seen some distant hills and imagined carving yourself out the consummate track? Sandy, sweeping turns that meandered up precipitous precipices. Straights that were something more than asphalt-smooth launching ramps, where there were more lines through the corners than in your grandmother's forehead. Where the whole track was covered by a three-foot layer of finely packed loam.

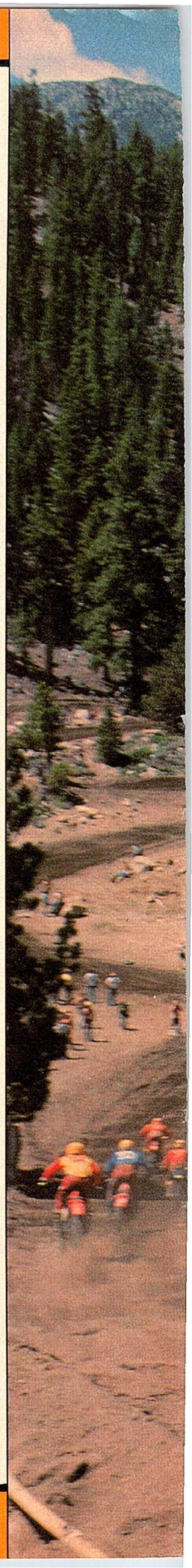
Mammoth Mountain is just such a place. Located just outside the ski community of Mammoth Lakes, California, is a race that's fast becoming one of the most looked-forward-to events of the season for western moto-fanatics. Riders will start training and conditioning months before the event, because to do well at Mammoth is to do well motocross at its best. And only the very serious will do well at Mammoth, because if the 8000-foot altitude doesn't get you, then the torturous sand whoops and wicked downhill will. To prevail at Mammoth has to be one of the most satisfying feelings known to both amateur and pro. Just knowing that you're ready for anything, or finding out how unready you are, can be quite an enlightening experience. What makes Mammoth is not just the ultra-fine track and track preparation, but in fact the very thing that makes getting a National there a problem — its location. Most Nationals depend on large cities to draw a sizable crowd to the races. The nearest major city to Mammoth Lakes is Sacramento, 200 miles to the west. This also means that it is far from the accompanying smog and industrial pollution and the problems that large crowds bring with them.

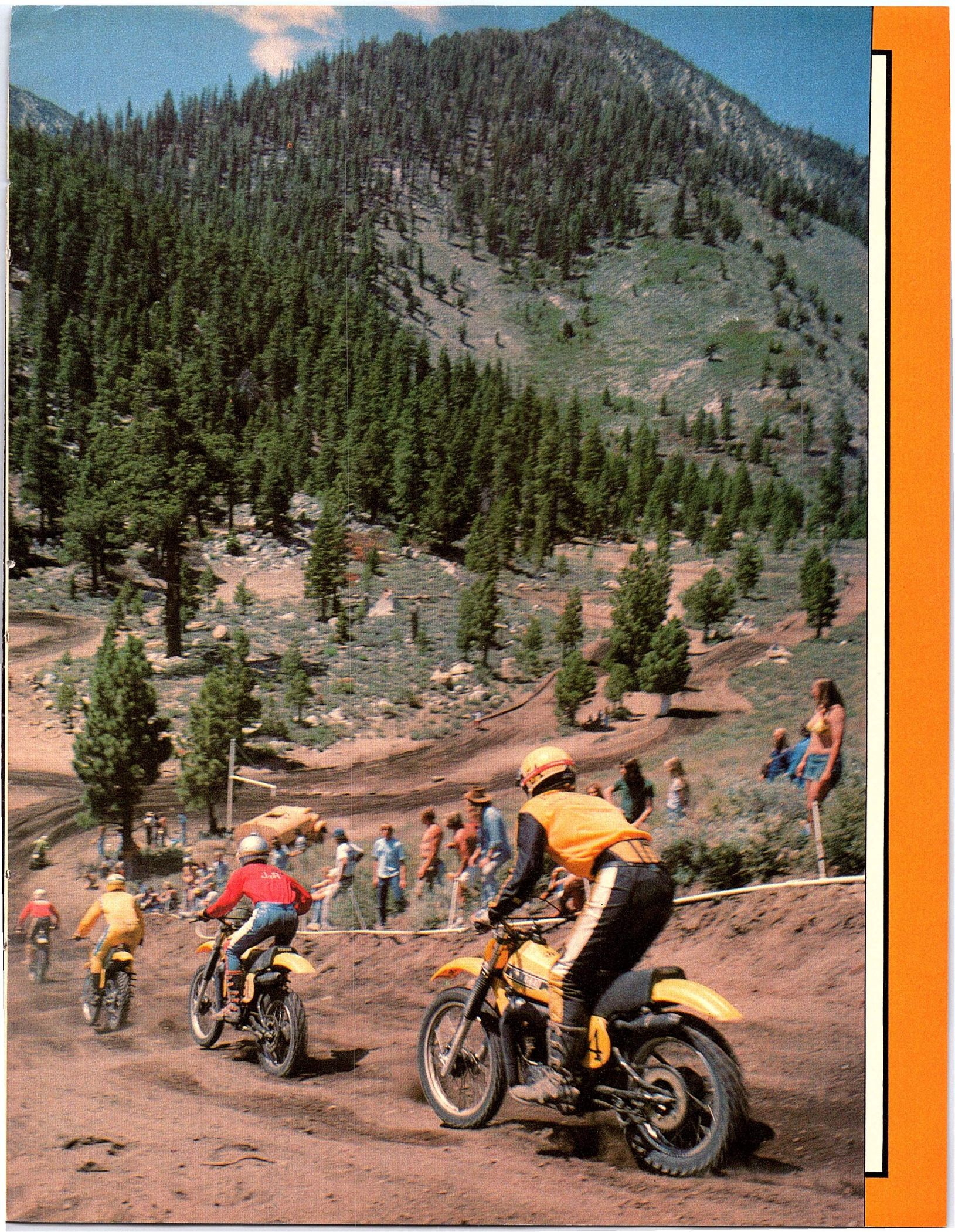
The track is raced on but twice a year. Once for the Old Timer National, June 18-19, and again the following weekend. With no 250 or 500 Nationals running that weekend, a lot of name pros show up each year to do battle with talented independent and shop-sponsored riders. This year factory shoes like Kawasaki's Gary Semics and Terry Clark showed up to battle both the talented local pros and other factory pros like Team Bultaco's Rich Eierstedt and Kenny Zahrt, Team Maico's Gaylon Mosier, Ossa's Greg Robertson and Yamaha's newest factory shoe Mike Bell. The mini factory teams of DG and FMF were also out, so there would be no easy money at Mammoth. The track is open a week prior to the race for man and machine to acclimate themselves to the thin air present at the 8000-foot altitude.

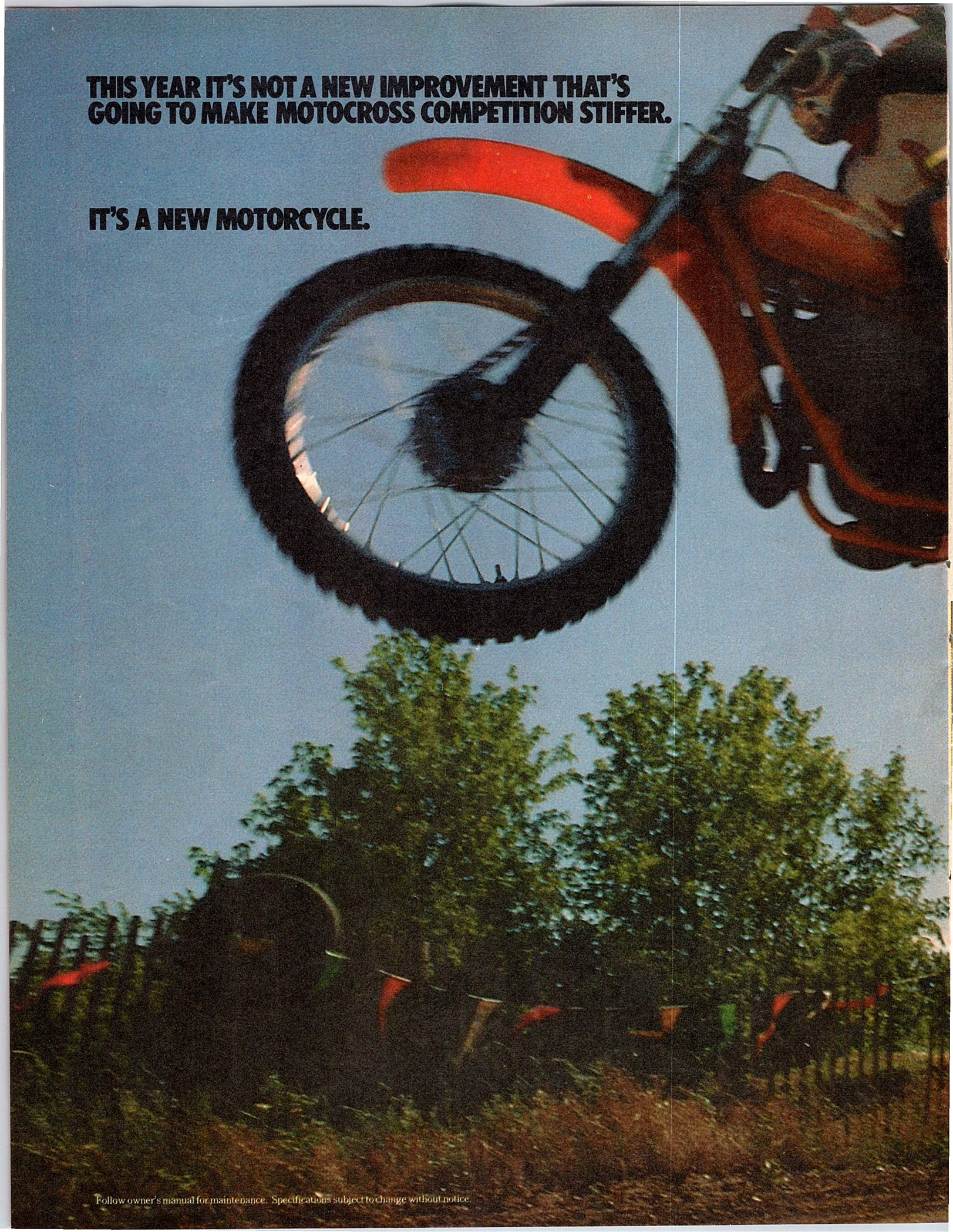
DG's John Tessitore traveled from San Diego to take the 125 pro win, combining a good start in the first moto with a mid-pack drive to the front in the second moto to take the only double moto wins of the day. Jetting was very critical in the small-bore class, as the little 125s strained to the limits climbing up the steep Mammoth slopes. Scott Karl took his Suzook across the line for second with two inspired rides. Last year's winner off of his "works" Sambo's restaurant ride, Jack Keese, motored in for third, followed by Terry Ducker's Yamaha, FMF's Bobby Kline, and "little Mike Tripes" on his DG Yamaha.

Greg Robertson had won Mammoth back in '73 aboard a Chay Zed and was now looking to take his Mid-Valley Ossa back to the days of yesteryear. Mike Bell had other ideas, as he took his Dave Osterman-tuned OW Yamaha to the first moto win with Robertson following in second on his new four-fin-barrel Ossa. Iron Man Gaylon "go for it" Mosier entered in both the 250 and Open classes

Continued on page 71



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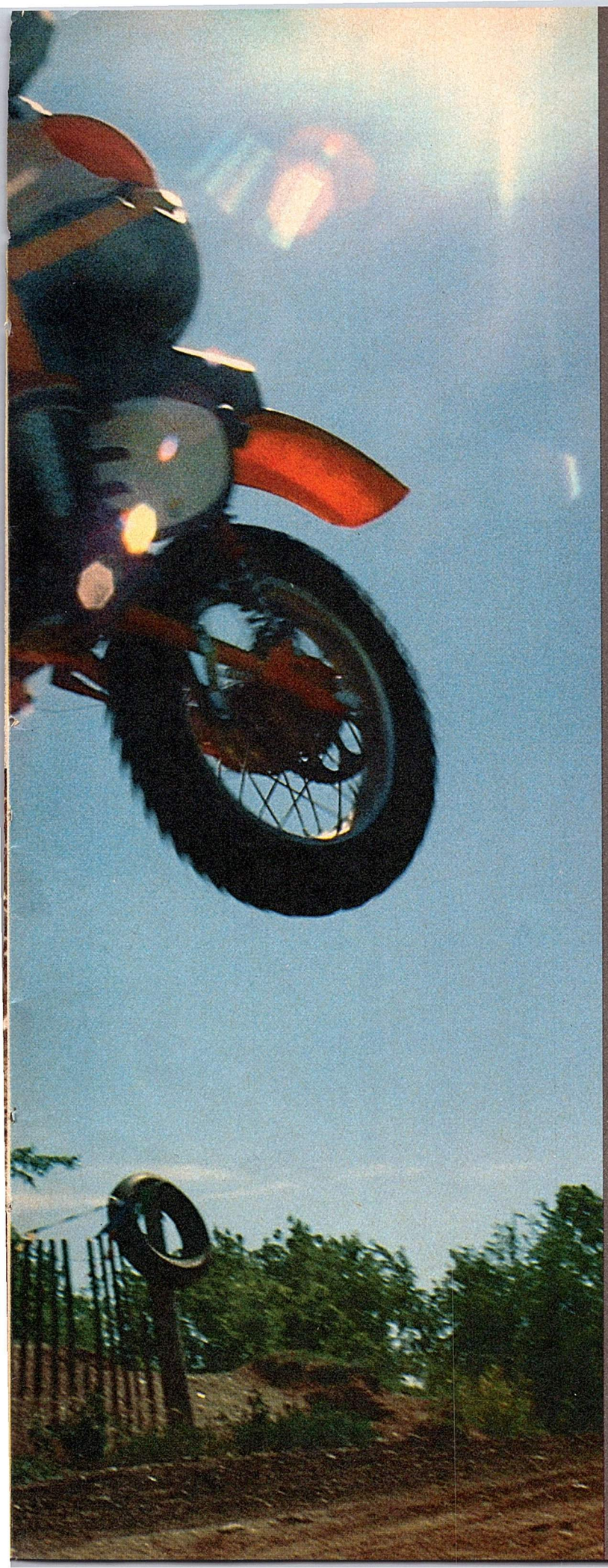


Harley-Davidson proudly introduces the MX-250.

The engine alone took four years to develop. 4 years and some grueling tests on the toughest dirt bike courses in the world.

Around that tough, dependable, winning power plant, we built an incredible motorcycle.

One of the few motocrossers in the business with chrome plated cylinders to cut down friction and dispense engine heat more evenly.

With an exhaust system channeled through the center of the bike rather than at its side.

The shocks are gas charged and won't heat up nearly as fast as ordinary shock absorbers. So they'll stay with the course as long as you do, reacting the same way on the last lap as they do on the first.

The MX-250 also features 9-inch telescoping front forks (among the longest in the business), with rigid, forged aluminum, triple clamps. There's a 5-speed constant mesh transmission that's not only strong and reliable, but dirt-proof, too. Shifting is incredibly smooth. Slipping unheard of.

Competitive features abound: Tomeselli throttle and forged aluminum levers, strong shift and brake lever, shoulderless Akront rims with 3-cross lacing, moly wheels, wide plastic fenders, cables routed meaningfully, a pair of comfortable handle bars, an aluminum gas tank.

The engine is quick, responsive. The handling excellent. Turning the equivalent of any motocross bike out there.

And everything is attached to a frame of high-strength, chromium moly steel.

It may be only one person's opinion, but Dirt Bike magazine tested our early motocross model in January 1977. Their conclusion:

"We found the Harley-Davidson® to be a full-fledged MXer, worthy of comparison with the best in its class."

The new MX-250 is even better.

AMF Harley-Davidson

UNTIL YOU'VE BEEN ON A HARLEY-DAVIDSON, YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ON A MOTORCYCLE.

National four-stroke Champion Mike Bell had so much fun on the Bengt Aberg Replica that he is going to get one to defend his title with.

BENGT ABERG QUADRA-STROKE

No more pre-mix

☐ Perhaps the biggest sensation in Grand Prix motocross this year has been caused by the efforts of Bengt Aberg, former two-time World 500 Champion, to campaign a 500cc four-stroke Yamaha. Aberg's efforts this year have been muted by an early-season shoulder injury and, during the North American swing of the GP wars, by nickel and dime problems. Yet when things are going well, Bengt has pushed his Hallman-Eneqvist TT500 Yamaha to top-three placings more than a few times. Not since the glory days of John Banks and his BSA-engined attempts has a four-stroke come so close. With a good portion of the season left, Aberg still stands a chance of winning a GP.

Every major manufacturer is currently pursuing a four-stroke program. Not a racing effort, but an attempt to beat the ever-tightening environment and emission control standards. When production lines become four-stroke full, a racing program with two-strokes may not be the most effective advertising, research or development tool.

The Hallman-Eneqvist is the brainchild of four famous Swedish motocrossers. With a belief in the viability of the program, they started late in the winter with a Sten Lundin-designed Husqvarna hybrid frame that accepted the Yamaha TT500 engine. Careful testing of the original components led to the development of the final frame mock-up. Bengt did additional testing in Sweden before the GP season began and the complete Hallman-Eneqvist bike started to take shape. Labeled a Bengt Aberg Replica, the bike was christened in the Grand Prix battles for the World Championship.

MOTOCROSS ACTION was interested immediately and continued to check on the progress of the machine from its inception to its eventual birth. Thus, when Don Vesco Yamaha in San Diego took the first frame kit and built an Aberg Replica, the famous MXA testing crew was hard on the trail. Don finally relented and sent us up a shiny,

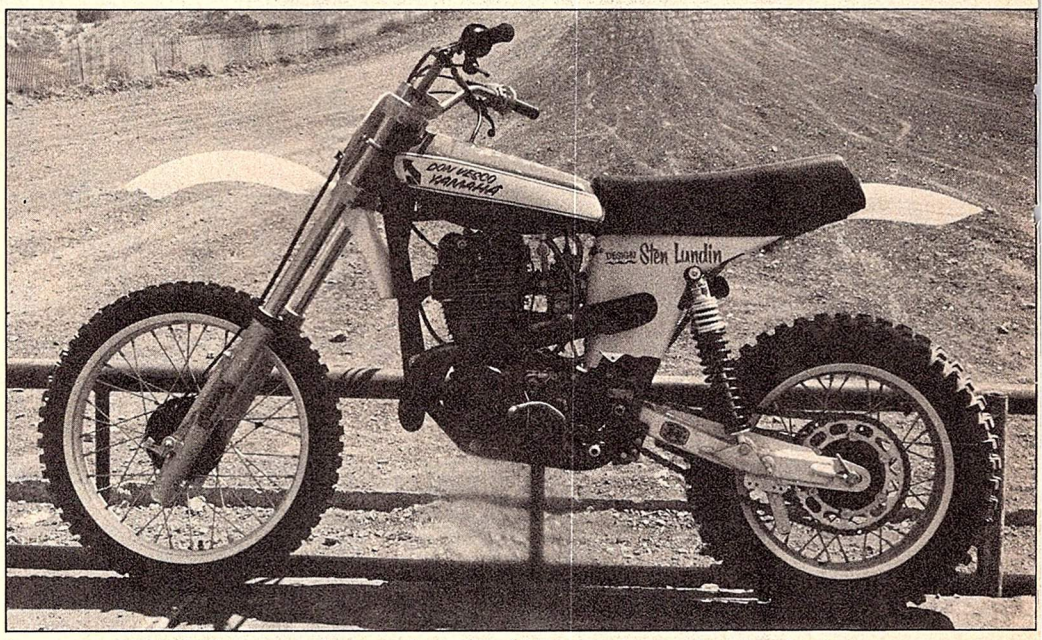
BENGT ABERG

brand-new, glistening Aberg Replica. Basically all the owner of a TT500 has to buy is the Aberg Replica frame kit and the accessory items that suit his taste.

The kit itself consists of the frame, aluminum swingarm, Timken steering head bearings, aluminum engine plates to accept a TT500 Yamaha four-stroke and the top head stay. The aluminum swingarm comes with two shock mounts, one that accepts a 14-3/8-inch shock in the forward position and one for a 17-inch shock in the laydown position. The forward mount location offers an inch more travel, so we opted for that. That is the complete kit, but also available are various accessory items that are necessary for the serious competitor: a special brake pedal, Hallman exhaust pipe and muffler, chain tensioner, side panels and various other parts.

The Bengt Aberg Replica that we tested was tricked out the nth degree. It came with Simons forks and a 17-inch rear Trelleborg on a Sun rim laced with heavy-duty spokes. The gas tank, seat and rear fender are stock YZ125 parts (1976). The hubs, carb (36mm Mikuni) and footpegs came from a YZ250.

When you are building a kit bike, the engine modifications are flexible from mild to wild. At the USGP Bengt Aberg rode a stock TT500 engine, although in Europe he does run a cam and Axtell flow-ported head. Our engine was mildly modified with an 11:1 Pro-Tec piston and cam, and a modified head. We used a stock clutch, but Bengt takes the stock clutch and unrivets it from the gear and then rivets on a YZ250 clutch and cage. The shift lever is a pretzelized TX750 Yamaha, that's a big street bike, and the air filter is a K&N. For a touch of class the stock throttle was replaced with a Gunnar Gasser. The Gunnar Gasser is a unique side-pull throttle that cannot be crunched in a fall.

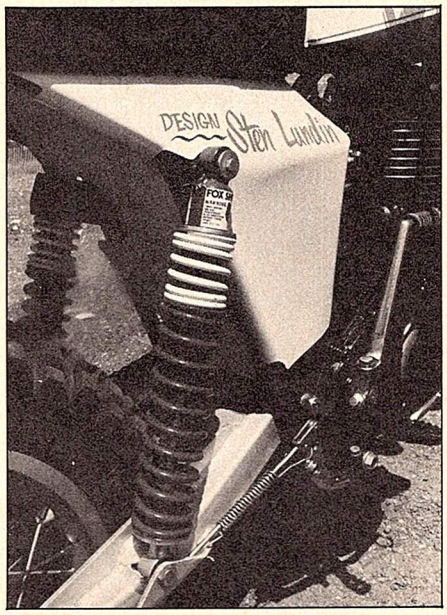


In excess of $3000 worth of stomping, throbbing and romping fun just waiting for action.

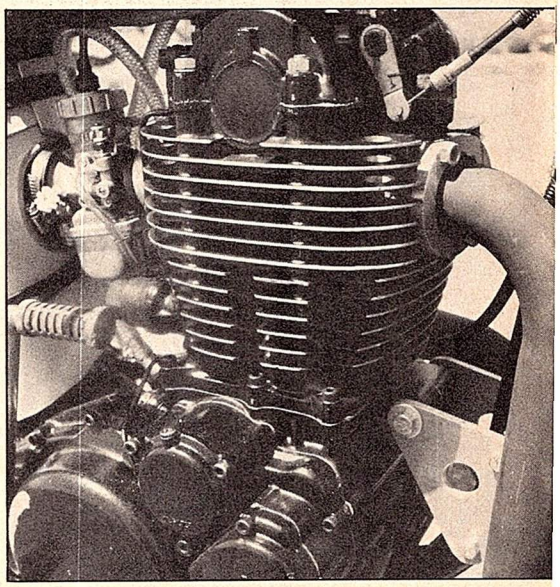
KICK IT OVER — TRY AGAIN

The bike is a beautiful red and white, with the massive black engine filling up most of the space. The Simons forks and Fox shocks bracketed the engine. MXA's crack test crew felt ready for whatever befell them. Al Baker is perhaps one of the best-known four-stroke riders in America. Al has used his Honda quad to great effect in Baja and even at Anaheim Stadium. Jody had ridden a Cheney/Honda for a while. Lance insisted he had plenty of four-stroke experience, but it turned out to be on an XR75 Honda. To balance out the regular crew, we invited National Four-Stroke Champion Mike Bell along for a freebie ride. Mike jumped at the chance, since Yamaha was planning on sponsoring him on one this year at the four-stroke Nationals at Carlsbad.

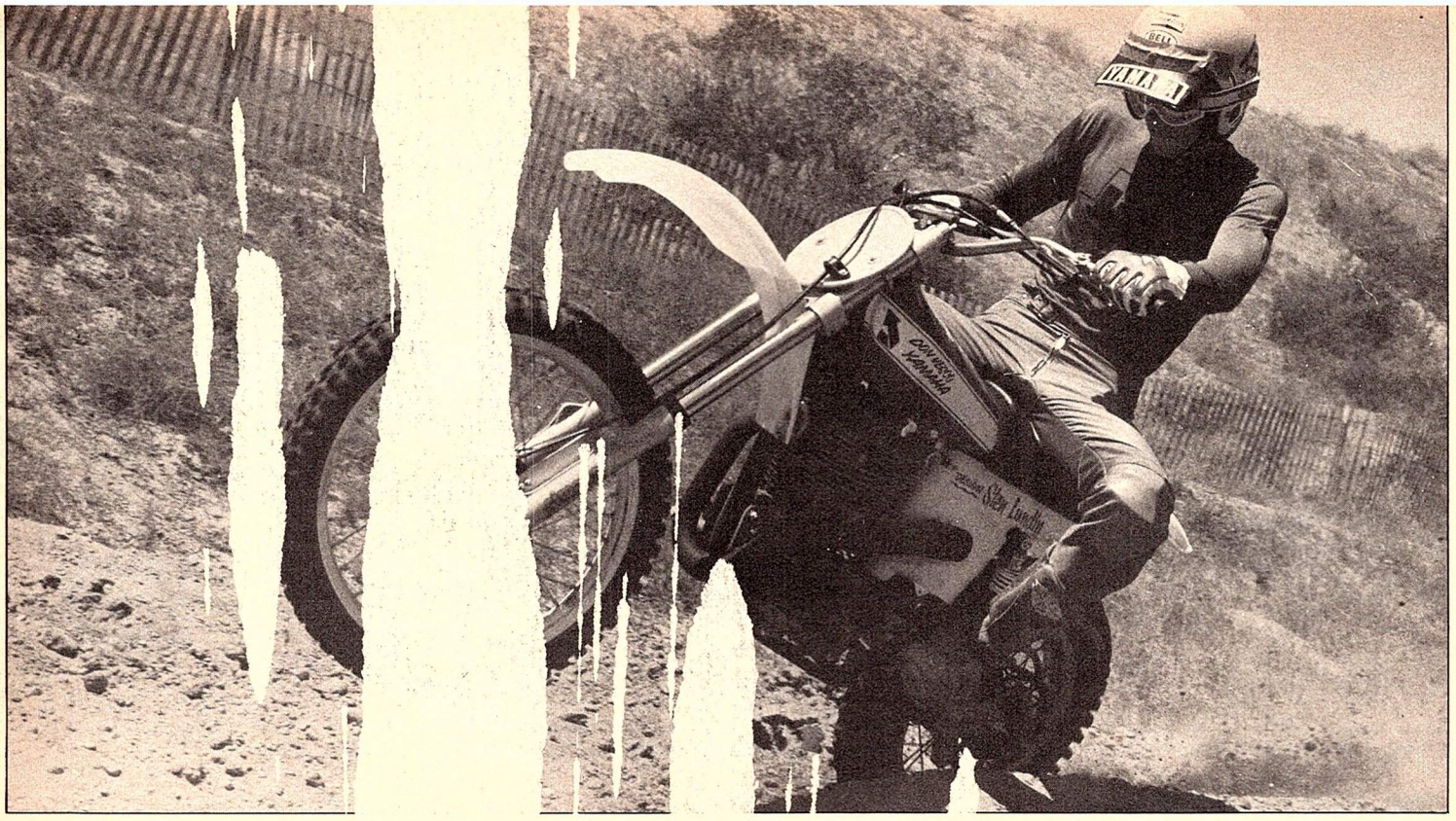
The starting drill is simple: pull the compression release and pump the kickstarter until the engine comes up on compression. Then release the compression release and toss yourself skyward onto the kickstarter. If you did everything right, it fires into a mighty roar and you're off. If you didn't, then look for a downhill and push. To our surprise everyone got the bike fired over, from the smallest to the weakest. Choke the Mikuni when it is cold, and just kick when it's warm.



Fox shocks and a 5.00x17-inch Trelleborg put the power pulses to the ground.



It is a tight fit, but that is what makes it so good. To those of you under 16 years of age, this is a four-stroke engine.



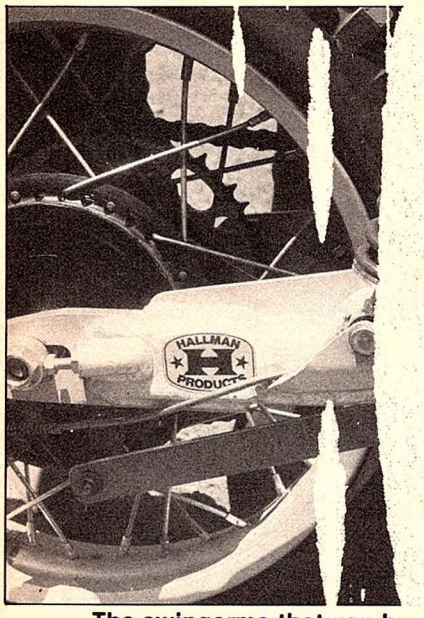
When the throttle on th was on, yo , heard it, and so d everyone else.

On the line the engine j so sweetly and blubbers your hands off the thro tle your goggles, tighten yo out for lunch and it sti ticking. Selecting first gear t the best bet. Our bike was teeth on the countershaft a rear sprocket. It was a little local MX work. Once you wi hear a roar, feel the rus ground blurring by, but yo like you're going fast. The r

simple: the builds its revs at the speed two stroke, each has a longe sable life span and sound is hea but mellow. On a ck local track t bik isn't as fast er e sta ting hill as its two-st oke ompeti ors. n a tacky track noting an acc lerate with it.

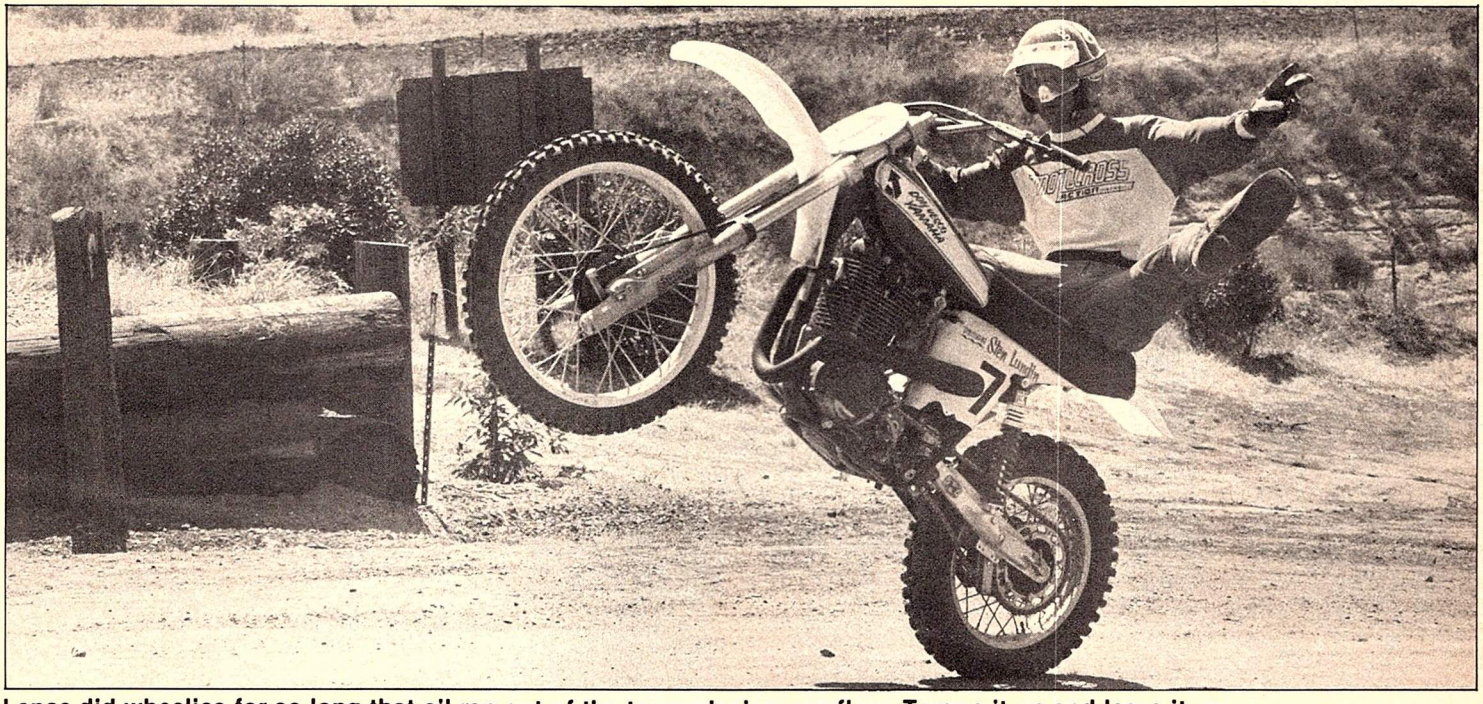
The A erg Replica will accept almost ny kinc of front forks. The Don Vesco ike had Simons forks, the best off-he-shelf models available, and we had no complaints except for individual weight demands. The rear end was busy, and an abundance of compression damping in the Fox shocks was to blame. After several tries we decided that the 17-inch Fox Airshox on the back was the best setup of the two options, even though it means the loss of some travel.

The engine runs clean and pulls fine. If a stock 500 engine is competitive for Aberg, then that is saying something.



The swingarms that you bu have two shock mounts ins one forward mounted unit.

Even in tight corners Mike Bell didn't reach for the front brake until the last moment, thanks to compression braking.



Lance did wheelies for so long that oil ran out of the transmission overflow. Torque it up and leave it up.

ABERG

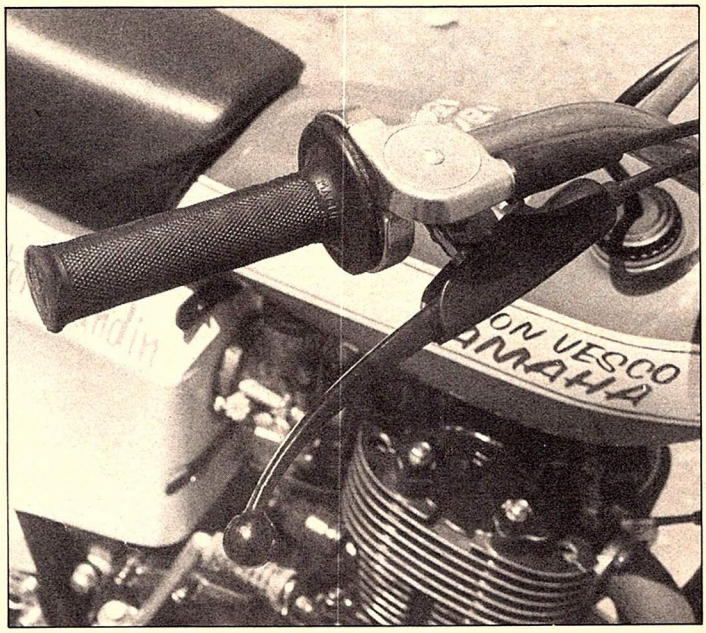
The logical comparison for all of our four-stroke testers was with the Honda engine. Although each rider had raced a breathed-on version, they all voiced the same complaints. The Honda revs much quicker and much higher. The Yamaha was like a tractor and was down a little on top end. On any kit the engine tuning options are there for the owner to make. The TT500 engine we used was competitive and fast, but lacking a little on top end to the Honda, but Honda has yet to build a decent four-stroke MXer and the Yamaha was under us. Also, the Yamaha engine is narrower and lighter.

THE RIDE AND THE ROAR

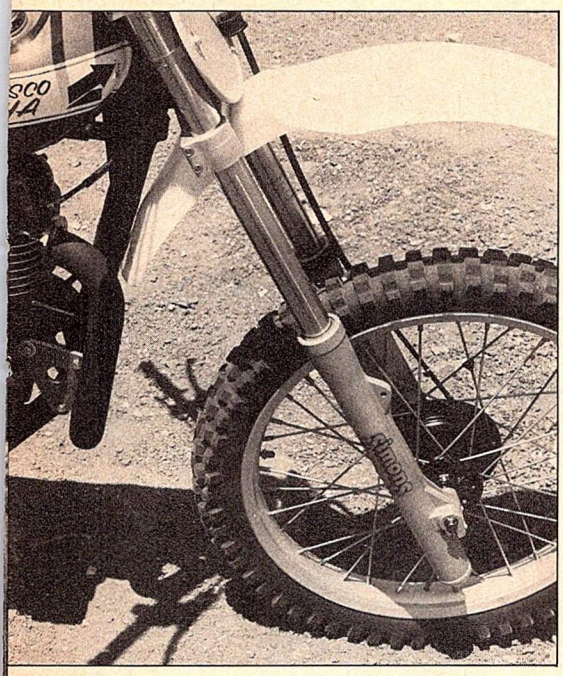
The Aberg Replica is a serious race machine. It can be raced successfully at any level of motocross competition. It isn't a playbike designed to look like an MXer. At the USGP Aberg's bike weighed in at 252 pounds, but the Swedish mechanics said that that was impossible. They claim a weight closer to 232 pounds. It just doesn't feel very heavy; as a matter of fact it feels like a normal motocross bike. Where a Honda quad feels heavy near the rear wheel, the weight balance on the Aberg is much nearer the centerline.

Thanks to the light feel and the beefy power, the Aberg model turns excellently. The trick in four-stroke racing is to select the gear you are going to negotiate the corner in as you approach it. Then snick the gearbox down to that cog, and at the last possible second back off the throttle and grab a handful of front brake. The rear brake is unnecessary, as the

Everyone took turns roosting around on one wheel. When the four-strokes come back, so will a lot of fun.



The Gunnar Gasser throttle doesn't have a throttle cable sticking out in a dangerous direction. It is smooth and efficient.



We encountered a slight problem with our Simons forks allowing the front wheel to hit the frame.

compression slows the bike instantly. You can always go in deeper with a quad-stroke. You never use first gear after you get off the line. A shift down to first in conjunction with a power shut-off *almost* launches you over the bars. The deceleration is that great! First gear is too low for corners. Second and third are the most productive gears, with fifth gear being reserved for the Bonneville Salt Flats.

The Aberg is comfortable to ride. The seating and levers fall right at hand. The brake pedal position is exceptionally good, as it is readily under your foot, but not in your way. The airborne attitude of the bike is not scary at all. It flies straight, the front end stays up and any crookedness is handled by a healthy twist of the throttle.

CHANGES MAKE THE WORLD GO 'ROUND

We didn't like the footpegs. They were way too high and too far forward for almost all our tastes. The shorter rider will adjust more easily. The front forks had to be extended to the max to keep them from allowing the tire to hit the front downtube on full collapse. This problem is related to the triple clamps on the Simons forks and does not appear on Marzocchi, Ceriani or new YX250/400 forks when they are mounted. The front brake cable kept pumping up. Actually, it almost locked up twice going over jumps. The cable was too flexible and needed a

Continued on page 72

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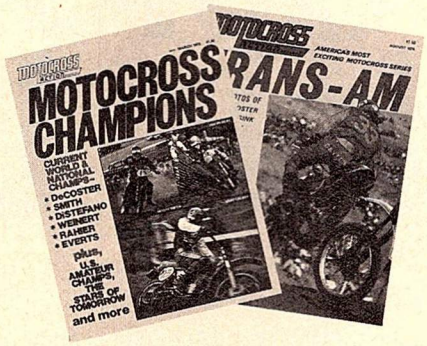

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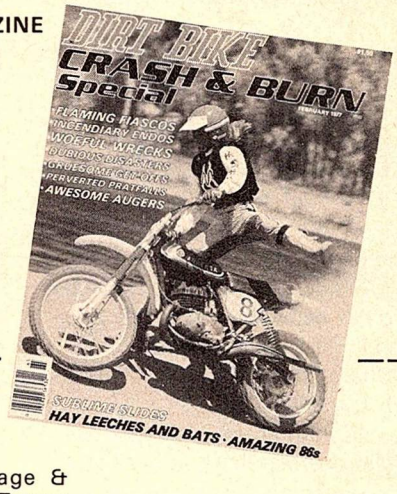

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DeCoster, Wolsink, Lackey

DeCoster

D: There were quite a few International races where all the World Championship contenders appeared, mainly in Belgium. In those races, things went very well for me. I won most of the races very easily.

MXA: New motorcycle?

D: New bike, but it was practically the same bike as last year. There was very little change in it. And I did not have any chance to race Mikkola until the weekend before the first Grand Prix in Austria. And so we could not really tell how good or bad Heikki was this year at the beginning of the season.

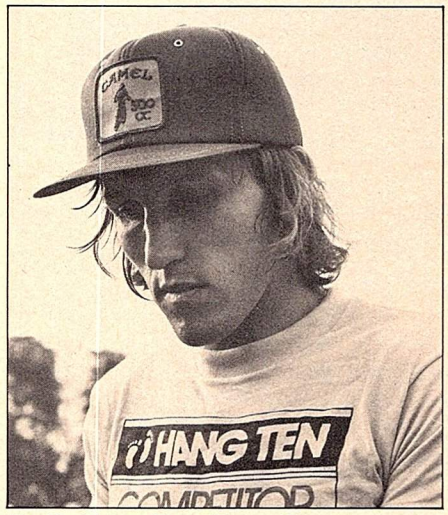
MXA: What about the Grand Hants two-day, the Easter race?

D: Yeah. In the Easter Trophy he won, but I broke down in the first heat and I won the second day, so it was very difficult to judge who was the best that weekend also. The first Grand Prix was at Sittendorf, **Austria,** and I made a big boo-boo in the first heat. I was not in gear when the gate dropped, and I started there last, of course. And I managed to come back and win the race the first heat. And the second heat, again, I did not have too good a start. And I came back in about halfway through the race and came up on van Velthoven, and I had a very difficult time passing him. He always seems to be able to go twice as fast or hold me off more than anybody else. Because for him, I think it's more important that he beats me to do good in the race. It's the only thing he looks for. And so finally I got by him, but then the first guy had quite a big lead, and I did not have enough time to make it up there. So I finished third and won the Grand Prix overall. And Heikki did not do too good in that race. It's a very hilly track, and bumpy, and the grass was in very good condition. It had rained the week before and all that. And the track was as good as we could wish it could be. So I came out there with 25 points.

In **Holland**, things did not go very good. It's a very particular circuit. It's like racing on fireroads. It's a straightaway between rows of trees, and then a 90-degree turn and then another straightaway with a man-made jump in it.

MXA: That would probably be Gerrit's home track.

D: It was Gerrit's home track because it was in Holland. But we had a lot of problems with the organization there. It was very dangerous and very fast also. The track was wide, but it was between trees all the time. The riders, of course, make as straight a line as possible between two corners. So it was reduced to one groove. And it made it very difficult to pass or make time up if you did not have a good start. So the first start, I went away first and made this 180-degree turn at the end of the straightaway. And when I started turning, Brad was on the inside and something went wrong with his brake pedal and he could not slow down. And I happened to be on his



Wolsink

W: I've ridden a lot of Internationals. That's common in Europe. Beginning in February we start mostly in Belgium with some races. Then you look for a race in Germany, Switzerland or France to get on a hard surface similar to what the GPs are on.

MXA: Do you pick the ones you want to go to?

W: Yes. You pick the ones where the most competition is. In February there are not that many races, because they're still in the season, and the only races that are a little successful are the sand races, the deep sand like the Florida races. You start sorting out the bikes, you go testing every week, training, and every race is really more test than race. They come in March, most Internationals . . . the bigger races like in Holland, St. Antonis, and they really want to win them. So then the bike must be on a good level, 'cause the first GP is coming. This year in the beginning it started good for me and then I screwed up.

MXA: Nothing went right?

PERSONALITIES

☐ Several hours after the final moto at the USGP in Carlsbad, California, we asked the three riders, DeCoster, Wolsink and Lackey, who still had a shot at the 500 World Championship title chase which was being led by Heikki Mikkola, to relate their racing experiences regarding the events up to that point. When you read what they have to say you should allow for the accents and interpret accordingly. Brad's, of course, should be no problem.

To add a postscript, the Canadian GP was held the weekend following this interview, and Heikki virtually clinched his second 500cc World Championship by winning the first moto and taking third in the second. Roger, still having his problems, followed Heikki to the finish in each moto for a second and fourth. Brad showed that what he said in the interview was indeed a truism as he finished a strong second overall with a 3-2 scoring. He is on the verge of being the first American ever to win a 500 GP. Gerrit, still having his starting problems, ended up fifth in the first moto and then put it together to win the second, giving him a third overall placing and a few extra points over his Suzuki teammate, DeCoster, for second in the world standings. (ed.)

W: Yeah. I need . . . to race a Grand Prix, I never can make a top practice time. I cannot just go out and make a fast time. I need to race. And it loads me up so much. I knew my physical condition was good and so was my riding. I've got confidence in the bike again. Because at the beginning of the season, the rear suspension was really bad. And until two weeks ago, I ran homemade shocks and springs from Holland by two guys.

MXA: Who was that?

W: White Power. They give a name to the shocks because they make white springs first. So I rode with their shocks on the back until we got a new frame.

MXA: What was Roger using?

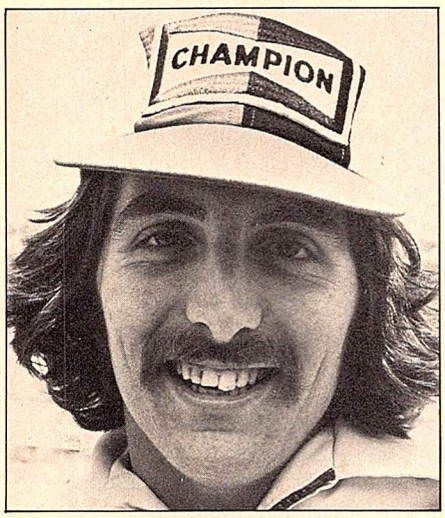
W: Roger was on Konis.

MXA: And you couldn't use those?

W: Yeah. I could use those but I didn't want to work with Koni. It was a personal thing. It was not a money deal or anything. I knew that when Kayaba at Suzuki would come up with shocks which would last or be good, that we would change to Kayabas again. Kayaba really didn't like us to use anything else. So I don't like to put all my experience and efforts into a big company like Koni and then give them free information. Not only do we help them by getting shocks, but they can make a lot of money and also give it to the other riders and companies. I rather like to work with some young guys who really do it for themselves. So they have some boost in their sales. I help them out, and they help me out a lot.

In **Austria** it went really good for me. I was leading the first moto, and my chain guide got bent in the last lap and the chain came off two times. I finished seventh or eighth. And the second moto I won.

MXA: So actually, had you had no trouble, you would have won both motos.



Lackey

L: We got our new bikes before an International race on Friday in **England** . . . and they seemed to work really well. Everything was improved from what we tested in Japan — a little bit faster and a little bit better. But I had a small problem with my shoulder . . . I had crashed earlier in the German race and cracked my shoulder blade down on the bottom where the muscle is attached to it.

MXA: Did you know it was cracked?

L: No, I didn't know it was broken until after Austria. It didn't get better, and didn't get better, so I went to the doctor and had it x-rayed, and it was broken down at the bottom.

MXA: Was this after the Easter weekend?

L: Yeah. In the Easter races I was taking some pain pills and trying to race. I did OK in Ringwood, England, I won, and then the next day, or the day after, was Sunday and Monday in Belgium at the Easter races. I was second behind Heikki the first day and second behind Roger the next day.

MXA: You didn't run the 250 class?

L: No, I didn't have a 250 . . .

MXA: And they did, right?

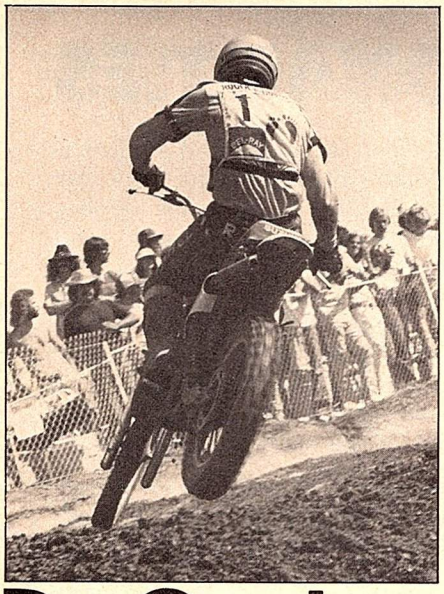
L: Yeah. So I didn't have an overall finish. And then I left for **Austria**, and compared to those racetracks Austria was a lot of hills and a lot of ups and downs, and those races had been pretty flat, so my shoulder wasn't bothering me very much. Then when I got to the hills, I had to hold myself from coming down against the handlebars . . . you know, going down the hills while you're braking. I just can't do it. In Austria I was having a lot of problems . . . I had to completely change my riding style. I had to sit up on the gas tank like Roger, and sit like that. And I was making comments to Roger that I must look just like him, but it wasn't even like the way I ride. In the first race I got a bad start and just couldn't get through the dust.

MXA: In the first moto?

L: Yeah. I couldn't even get into the top ten. I was moving up but ran out of time. In the second moto I was in the top ten, but maybe halfway through I broke a shock reservoir and all the oil came out of one shock, so I was running on one shock half the race, swapping ends, and I finished in the top ten — seventh or something. Got some points anyway.

MXA: Were you happy with the bike up to that point?

L: Oh yeah. I was just stoked, you know? I didn't realize there was going to be such a problem with my shoulder until I got to those types of tracks where there were a lot of hills. It just didn't work and I just couldn't put it together. So, immediately after that . . . it had already been a month, I think. I had thought it was going to get better but it never did, so I went to the doctor and they said it was broken right where the muscle is attached. So it was kind of a pain! I laid off for a week



DeCoster

outside, and so he took me with him on the way outside. And Heikki just turned slowly on the inside and he had the start. I was quite a bit behind him. And then I came back to third place, but I could not make up any time on Heikki.

MXA: Was his bike faster?

D: Well, his bike was maybe a little . . . it fit the tracks maybe a little bit better in the first races in the season, outside of the Austrian one. I think his bike was not in top power. It was not faster than ours, maybe, but it was faster out of the corner because of better traction; it adapted better to the surface. Also, there was a little bit of luck involved. If I had taken the start, I think things would have been completely different. And then in the second heat, almost the same thing happened again . . . this time Gerrit was with the leaders in the start and again, somebody on the inside went straight and took me with him. And it seems to be the story of this year.

MXA: So you played catch-up again.

D: I had to play catch-up again and try to make the best I could out of it. And again, Heikki made a slow start, and turned slowly on the inside and happened to come out first. Also, in some sections of the track our bikes did not seem to be fast enough.

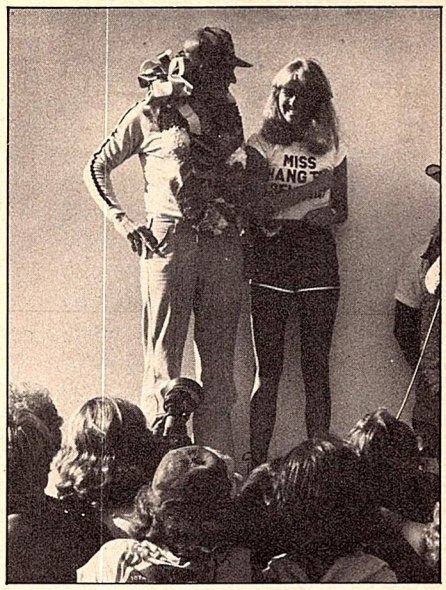
MXA: So where did you end up?

D: I ended up third overall again. I'm not 100-percent sure, but Heikki won with Gerrit second and me third if I remember right.

In the **Swedish** round in the first start Heikki took a very good start and then had some problems with his gear lever. There was a lot of rain prior to the race and they had to alter the track. It was more like a stadium-type race. Because of the weather conditions, they had to completely change it and bulldoze it. And it was a very little track, also. In the beginning of the season, like in Holland, I did not make the best (qualifying) lap. But I made a better lap than what I got credit for. That did not give me a good place on the starting area and it was very important in Holland to be on the inside. The same thing happened in the two following races in Sweden and Finland. In Finland, for example, Bengt Aberg and Ake Jonsson were given the best times. And the best actual time in Finland was Mikkola's and the second best was my time. But again, I had to go to the start line like seventh or eighth, even though we were first and second. And so back to the Swedish round. Heikki took a pretty good start and bent his gear lever in the first lap and had to stop. And he started right behind me when he went back to the track. Again I had an average start. The track had a lot of water — it was sand mixed with water — so there were a lot of problems with visibility. As we caught up from behind, Heikki was always two feet behind me. Brad was leading the race. About ten minutes before the finish, my goggles got so dirty I had to take them off and Heikki took advantage of it, of course, and passed me. And that's how the race finished: Brad first, Heikki second and me third. In the second heat it was again a medium start for me but I came back pretty quick. There was a section of the track where it was a big, giant mudhole, and you could not really tell where you were supposed to go. In the water and mud, there were also some big rocks. I happened to hit one and the front wheel stopped. I went over the bars. And I had to come back from behind again. I think I finished fourth that heat. In **Finland,** first start — there was a very high gate there, it's about three or three and a half feet high — and I think I was away as good as I could have been away. The gate was just falling and my wheel was already coming slowly over, and on the same side of the gate there was Bengt Aberg, Karsmakers, and I think Lindstrom also. The gate kind of locked like for a second halfway down. And all the guys with a good start — there were about five of us — hit the gate and it flipped us over.

MXA: Did they have a restart?

D: No, because Belgium did not have a jury member there, so it was very



Wolsink

W: Yeah. I should have won both. I was really hot. I was going for it.

In **Holland**, it was the worst track I think we've ever had the GPs on.

MXA: Roger also said it was dangerous.

W: It was so dangerous and so difficult to pass that the start was very important. Heikki got away first in both motos. And I started the first one about 16th, so I could only make it up to fifth.

MXA: Was that because of a poor start?

W: Yeah, poor start! All this year, I haven't been that good in the start. In Siddendorf, I was two times first.

MXA: Why do you think that is?

W: I don't know what it is. You can call it bad luck.

MXA: Roger has also been having bad starts!

W: Yeah, he also have bad starts. And Heikki is the only one who got it together always. We always screwed up on one or the other thing. And then in Sweden . . . in the second moto in Holland, I couldn't catch Heikki, but Heikki was 40 seconds away and I was second and then Roger was 40 seconds behind me and then 40 after him was the fourth man.

MXA: Really spread out.

W: Oh yeah. Because the trees were so big. Sweden was a nice track.

MXA: Do you know what you ended up overall in Holland?

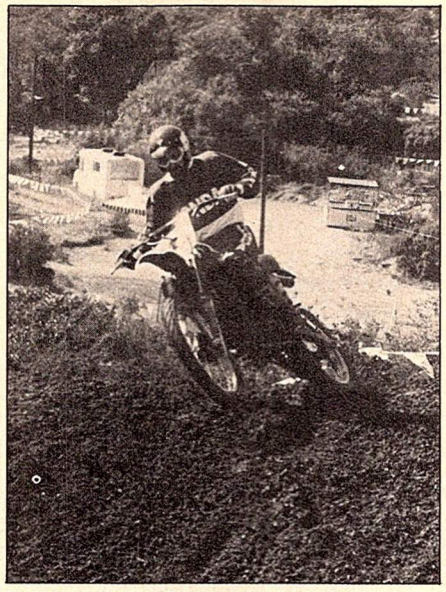
W: Fourth. Brad was third and Roger second. And Heikki was first.

MXA: And then you went to **Sweden**?

W: Sweden was sandy, wet, I had a bad start in the first one . . . or not so bad . . . I was in the first seven or

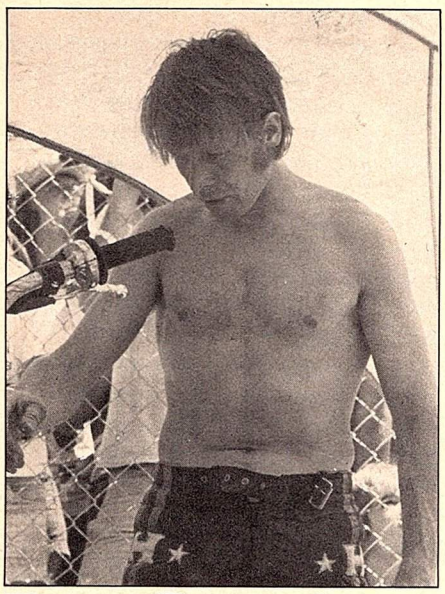
eight. And then my chain came off in the first lap. So I had to start all the way back. Came back to fifth place, fourth place and then five laps before the end the chain came off again.
MXA: Why did your chain keep coming off? Did you run a tensioner?
W: I don't know. Now we're running a tensioner. We never did before. We never have had chain problems. We didn't increase that much our travel, so maybe if we had made drastic changes to the frame you could expect to have a chain problem. But it was also, you know, like Puyallup — that kind of sand. With stones in it . . .
MXA: So a little stone would derail it easily.
W: And especially, you know, on the gas — accelerating on the bottom part is just fluttering around. So I got second in the second moto, and eighth in the first moto.
MXA: In Holland, that was your home track?
W: No, not my home track. It was the track I disliked the most at home.
MXA: You were familiar with it, though.
W: Oh yeah. I knew it. And I told them before if they ran the GP on it, it can be disastrous. And they had a lot of comments from people and critics, but they were too stubborn. Old traditional. But in the meantime, we discovered that like in the beginning of the season we have too much power in the bikes. Very difficult to handle. You know, you've got a peak of power and the suspension collapses. It's very difficult to work out, and Sittendorf (Austria) was fast. And suddenly on deep sand like Sweden and Holland, it showed that our bikes were not fast enough anymore. Yamaha got a new bike and I don't know what happened. But suddenly our bikes were too slow out of the corner and it just didn't pull.

For **Finland** they sent new cylinders in a week's time. And then it was already better because in both races Roger and I just make seventh, eighth or ninth in practice time. Way back!
MXA: But he mentioned that maybe there was some screw-up in the recorded times.
W: Oh, in Finland for sure. But not in Sweden and Holland. It was . . .
MXA: Legitimate.
W: Pretty much, and he couldn't make up six seconds difference. And in Finland only Heikki was fast, by four seconds or something. Or two. Then Roger. But then the official list here was just ridiculous. But like a two-ten (2:10) was just impossible. He agrees



Lackey

instead of going to an International and took it easy and rested. I went to the International in **Holland** prior to the Grand Prix the following week. Gerrit won, Heikki was second and I got third. My shoulder was getting a little bit better and just hurt a little bit. It had been a month and a half, so it had had time to heal. The Holland Grand Prix was the next week. Heikki was fastest qualifier, I was second fastest, and then I think Roger was third. Heikki and I took good starts . . . I really took a good start, but he went inside me and got out of the first corner first, and went on to win the first moto. I got second and Roger was third. Then in the second moto, I got another good start and came into the first turn just about first, but somebody really beat me from the outside and cut across. It had just finished raining and the guy was kind of shutting the door on me . . . I had to keep turning farther and farther so the guy wouldn't take away my front wheel. It was slippery from the rain, and I kind of just slid and crashed and was last right at that point. I got back up and went through the traffic to finish fourth. I tied Roger for second overall. We both had 20 points and he took second with a faster time. They had a different system than they used today and I ended up third.
MXA: They don't use the same overall scoring system?
L: Well, they change it from week to week.
MXA: Well, I understood that the Olympic System was used for the overall — for the whole series.
L: Not all the time.
MXA: What happened in **Sweden**?
L: Heikki, I think, was first in qualifying again and I was second. In the first moto I was about fourth off the line. I passed Aberg and a couple of other guys and passed Schmitz to lead the race. Heikki, in the first lap or two, bent his brake pedal and so he stopped to fix it. It took only three or four seconds. My mechanics told me they had practiced the routine on Saturday, because they knew it would be a problem. They bent it back on Saturday in practice and he came in real fast, like a gas fill-up at Daytona. And when he did bend his brake pedal and stopped he didn't lose any places, but he lost a few seconds.
MXA: Was it muddy?
L: Yeah. That might have cost him the win, I don't know. We got to racing pretty good. I finished first, Heikki was second and Roger was third. In the second moto, I didn't get as good a start and my chain fell off five laps into the race. Heikki took a good start and just wheelied away. Gerrit got second and Roger was third. Before that moto I was three points from Gerrit and five points from Roger and still in fourth place, but close. When the chain came off I dropped 12 or 13 points to Gerrit and Roger, who got second and third. In **Finland** Heikki won both motos, just going away. I got second and a third, and Gerrit got second and a third, so we tied in points. I beat him by overall time, so I ended up second and he was third overall. We didn't gain or lose any points there. But I still was 12 or 13 points behind from the preceding week in Sweden. Roger finished fourth and fifth. I think he had some problems off the line. Heikki won the first moto in **Germany**. Gerrit was second, and Aberg was third. I hit my foot on a rock and almost broke my toe. I fell off one time while trying to pass Gerrit. I finished fourth and Gerrit was sixth. In the second moto I got a flat tire 20 minutes into the race and rode the whole race with a flat and finished seventh.
MXA: Was it a rear flat?
L: Yeah. So I lost points again. Gerrit won that, and Heikki got second. I was still in fourth but was losing points from those two problems. The next week in **Italy**, on Saturday night, I got hit with the flu or something. I was sick and could barely ride. I tried, but it didn't do any good. I had to pull off both races. Gerrit finished second and fourth and Roger finished first and maybe a third. So, more points again . . . lost.



DeCoster

difficult to bring it up unless we made a protest. And I did not protest, and nobody else was interested in protesting. So Heikki took the start and I started from dead last and I came back into fourth place. I started 50 seconds behind — after my wheelstand. In the second heat, I paid a little bit for my efforts from the first and I could not do any better than fourth or fifth, I think. Have to check the records.

MXA: Did you get a good start in that moto?

D: No, I didn't get such a good start again because I was too careful this time. I was afraid the gate was going to stop again halfway.

MXA: Were you lined up on the same side of the line again?

D: No, I moved over a little bit because I was scared it was going to happen again. In **Italy**, for the first time this year, except for Austria, I managed to make the best lap time in practice again. And so I got first choice on the line. I think that gave me some confidence and made Heikki a little worried that it was not going to be all that easy all year long, maybe. In the first heat, again, I had a very bad start. On the first lap they put some water down just before the start, and I happened to be involved in a crash with a bunch of other people. So, I had to start from last place again, and finished third in that heat. I had closed in to about 20 seconds on Heikki and Gerrit, who were fighting it out for first place. In the seocnd heat I took the start, and Heikki was second right away from the beginning. I won the race and put over 20 seconds on Heikki. So that was my first day to be happy this year, after Austria. In **Germany** Heikki won the first heat and I was second. I was really close to him by the end of the race but could not pass him. In the second heat I again had an average start, and I came from behind back to take third place. By the end of the race I was really close to Heikki and Gerrit, who were fighting for first place. In the beginning I was about 14 seconds behind and I came within a second from them, and when trying to overtake them I killed my engine in a slow corner and finished third.

MXA: So in that race, in both motos, you got moderate starts?

D: Not too bad, it was about fifth or sixth place.

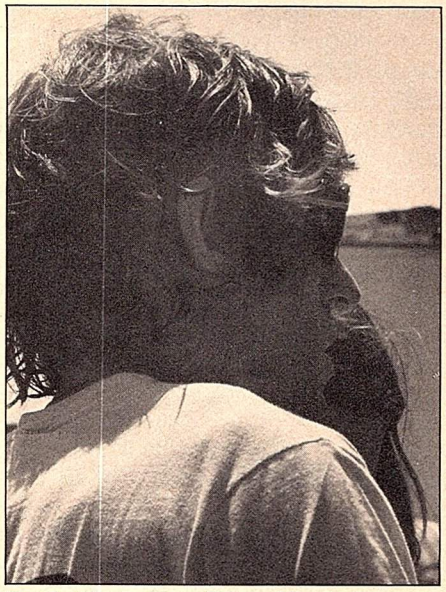
MXA: What was your attitude coming into **Carlsbad?**

D: Well, I had a feeling that, from Italy on, things were turning. Again, we raced a new bike for the first time. I made the best lap time in practice. In the first heat Brad and I tangled a little bit in the start. Our handlebars got a little bit locked together and I came out about fifth or sixth or something like that. I moved into second place pretty soon and Jimmy (Pomeroy) was leading between eight and ten seconds always. I thought I'd wait until the second half to try to get closer to him, but I guess I waited a couple of laps too long. The reason that I waited so long is that I thought I wouldn't be able to manage to keep up that same pace . . . in the first moto . . . through the race if I started going full speed from the beginning of the second half. So I waited and I waited a couple of laps too long, I think, and I came short by two seconds.

"I got angry and then . . . It was too late, you know. So many guys had gone by, it was too late. Maybe I should have tried from the beginning to keep going." Roger DeCoster

MXA: Were you surprised at Pomeroy?

D: No. Not really. I had said before the race that the Americans could do very well on this track. They have been used to the warm weather. And we have had very cold weather in Europe this year during the beginning of the season. Plus being in America. And the Americans have improved very much and have top equipment also. So I was



Wolsink

too. He made it in two-sixteen-six (2:16.6) or something like that.

MXA: In Finland, Heikki's home country, Roger mentioned that Heikki didn't even get credited for his fast time.

W: No. He was sixth or something like that. In Finland it's not that important because the start is pretty wide and everybody has a good chance. In the first moto I got a second. And in the second moto I got a third. Heikki was really unbeatable on that track.

For the **German** round, we got complete new bikes. New frames, new engines, new chains, the front sprocket closer to the swingarm bolt and stuff. The clutch lever different on the left side — not in the cage anymore. Little details. They were found to be pretty good. And then we had to use Kayabas. But I had the problem that they were tested in Japan . . . really tough but by guys that were just 60 kilos.

MXA: What do you weigh?

W: I weigh 82 and Roger is 76. And he could just make it with the springs. I just bottomed all the way off the track. And then when I gave the springs too much preload, it turned out that the shocks didn't have enough return damping. So the bike was like a squirrel and it was bothering me. But I won a moto, the second one. So it wasn't that bad. You can't complain, but it's not perfect either.

I still had the problem in **Italy**, leading the first moto, making a little mistake, Heikki passed me so I was second. In the second moto I was fourth. Here at Carlsbad I had little

problems with springs and it's still not perfect. It's not good adjusting. But we can work on that.

MXA: So let's go over what happened at **Carlsbad** today.

W: Today I got my baddest luck I ever had here. The first moto I was tangled up on the gate and somebody closed me in so I had to go last. In the first turn I made up some pretty quick, two or three laps it took me to get to fifth or sixth place. Then I passed Heikki but I couldn't make it up to Roger. I was catching him a little bit, until six seconds, and I stopped. I couldn't make it up any more.

MXA: Did trying to catch up and run through the crowd wear you out?

W: I got a little bit tired, you know.

"Then my front brake was gone. Just the cable to it, so I didn't have a front brake. It bothered me a bit. The handlebar was bent and my goggles were full of sweat, but I kept going. I said, why not? And then I saw Roger . . ."
Gerrit Wolsink

MXA: Was that from the heat?

W: Yeah. I think it's the difference, you know. The heat, I am not used to in certain circumstances. Although I have been training this week and running, but it's still not motocross with that tension.

MXA: What did you think about Pomeroy winning the first moto?

W: I couldn't believe it. I mean, only his practice time showed me he was fast. I didn't see him riding. I was wondering how he was riding this year.

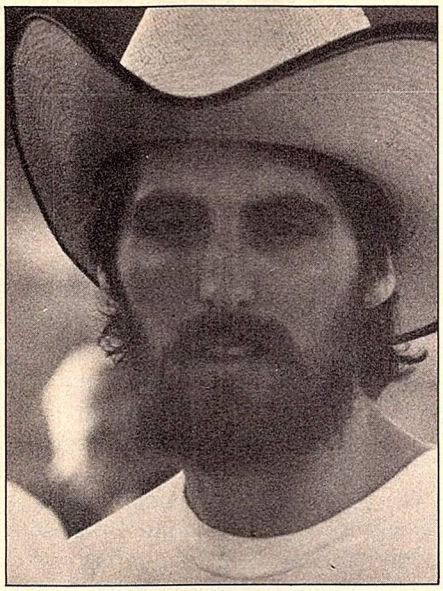
MXA: He hasn't been doing as well as expected.

W: No, he hasn't been doing well, but maybe he's extra pumped, plus he has experience on a Grand Prix track. This track was very difficult. The other Americans, you know, they couldn't . . . I passed them just where I wanted . . . guys like Croft and Mosier . . . Normally you have a lot of problems with them. But you just waited and you passed them.

MXA: So the roughness of the track made the better rider come through.

W: Yes. Oh, for sure. To last through two 45-minute motos.

MXA: So it was a rider's track this year.



Lackey

MXA: Were you getting good starts in these races?

L: In the beginning, until we hit the pavement starting areas. Like this week (Carlsbad), it was no good for me here.

MXA: What are the differences in the starting areas?

L: Sweden was like that (cement); Germany was like that; and Austria was like that. Quite a few lately. And it isn't good for me. I'd rather have dirt. You've been practicing starting all your life on dirt and you know how to do it finally, and then you get the cement and you gotta start all over again and learn what to do.

I scored no points in Italy. And when we came over here (**Carlsbad**) I wanted to secure fourth place. Nobody was close in fifth, but Gerrit and Roger were getting farther and farther away. This week, I am still not well after being sick — maybe I'm well, but I'm not strong, and all I could do was try. I could ride the first 30 minutes of each race OK, but then I'd get tired the last 15 and I was just floundering around. I fell down in the second one while leading. I tried but I was not well yet. By next week, I think everything should be OK again.

MXA: Roger mentioned that in the first moto you guys sort of tangled bars a little bit at the start.

L: Yeah, we got off the line pretty equal, and there was somebody on the right of me and Roger was on the left, and we were really close together. There's not much room going into that first corner and it's a little off-camber. We were just — not really tangled — but we didn't know which way to move. Everybody was so stuck together.

MXA: Well, you came out the worst on that, didn't you?

L: I probably shut off and took it easy instead of falling down.

MXA: In the second moto when you fell down in that tight corner, were you just tired — being sick and everything?

L: Yeah. Normally I wouldn't do something like that. Just tired, bad concentration, weak and just making mistakes where normally you would be strong — and mentally OK.

MXA: in the GPs you're fourth . . . obviously, you have got some wins coming. Do you think you can pull up into third?

L: Well, the way the points are, every race counts. Except for today, Roger has finished every heat. So has Gerrit and so has Heikki. I missed a couple of races, so if everything goes the way it should go, they've got to have some problems. They can't finish 24 races, I don't think it's possible.

MXA: I've heard that before!

L: But if they do . . . usually the second half is a stronger season for me. I usually have more problems in the beginning than the second half. Then I get a little rest at home and I come back to the last half and I'm pretty strong. I don't wish any of those guys bad luck, but I've had my problems already and I think maybe I'm through with them by now.

"I had to completely change my riding style. I had to sit up on the gas tank like Roger. I was making comments to Roger that I must look like him, but it wasn't even like the way I ride."
Brad Lackey

MXA: Both Heikki and Roger had new bikes this week. Roger says his is much improved — the power is better, and the handling is better.

L: We've stuck with the same bike from the beginning. All those guys are trying to catch up to our bike. That's why they've all changed and gotten new bikes. The beginning, when it was really wet — really deep, loamy tracks where you need a lot of power, I think . . . we had the fastest bikes. Now when it's summertime and drying, it gets slippery and it's a completely

DeCoster

not surprised that an American was in front. I think I started eighth in the second race and moved up pretty quick again and came into second place behind Brad. I closed in on Brad and I was getting ready to pass him when he happened to make a little slip. The track was pretty narrow in that section, and I was so close I could not avoid his bike when he fell, and I ran into it and twisted my forks a little bit.

MXA: Did you go over the bars?

D: Yeah.

MXA: And then you picked it up and went around to the pits . . .

D: Well, I wanted to straighten it out and the mechanic didn't understand right away what was happening with the bike and so . . .

MXA: You got angry.

D: I got angry and then . . . it was too late, you know. So many guys had gone by, it was too late. Maybe I should have tried from the beginning to keep going.

MXA: Do you think it was the frustration from the previous five races?

D: Yes, otherwise I think I would have tried to go on.

MXA: Because I've never seen you do that before . . . to quit like that.

D: I did hurt myself a little bit. You know, I hit the handlebars and it knocked the wind out of me a little bit. But it's correct; I shouldn't have stopped. I should have tried at least a lap or two and then see. But with the three years before, so many times things have happened to me, and my mechanic did not understand right away what he should have done to the bike and Heikki got by and Gerrit got by and I think . . . already this year I've had so many problems. And then on top of that, the three previous years at this particular race . . . I think that had a lot to do with my decision of stopping. It was a mistake and I feel bad, especially for my mechanic.

MXA: I understand you broke in a new bike prior to this race.

D: Everything has changed except the wheels, gas tank, and the front forks.

MXA: At the start of the season, if you took the three top bikes — for instance, the Honda, the Suzuki and the Yamaha — who would you say had the edge?

D: It depends on the circuits a little bit. I think in the first Grand Prix we were as good as anybody, maybe a little better. Then in the next three Grands Prix our bikes did not fit the circuits. These circuits were very particular. Also, in some situations we did not have enough power, and in other places on the track we had more power than the other guys.

MXA: Do you feel that you still have a chance?

D: I will try until the situation is such that there is no hope . . . but chances are very small now. He has 42 points now on me and Gerrit, and 42 points in five races — he can break down in three heats, and we have to win the other three to be tight with him. So if he plays it safe now he's 90-percent . . . home free.

MXA: Your five World Championships is unprecedented. But in the 250 class another Belgian, Joel Robert, has won six World Championships. Do you think that has motivated you some . . . maybe you want this Championship too much.

D: I'd really like to win the Championship, of course, and I'd like to win six just to quiet the people who think that Joel was better. But I don't think you can compare the 250 with the 500.

MXA: No, I would agree.

D: If you compare that, then you have to say, look at these guys like Nilsson, Tibblin or Lundin. They all have won two World Championships in the 500 class. And then you would have to say that Gaston Rahier is a better rider than them, because Gaston is going to have been three times World Champion this year. I don't want to put down Gaston, but still I don't want to take away . . . I think we cannot take away the guys like Tibblin, Lundin, Nilsson, Jeff Smith and Paul Friedrichs, because he won three World Championships in the 500 class. I think the competition level is very different.

MXA: Would you say that this is one of the toughest 500 Championship seasons, or do you recall another more competitive than this year?

D: I think it was the same as '74 and '75. 1976 was a little easier, it became a little difficult at the end for me because I happened to break down in the U.S. Grand Prix and the Canadian which was four heats in a row. Gerrit was closing, so the end of the Championship was very close. But it was not as heavy a year as '74, '75 and this year.

MXA: The odds are with Heikki right now. Let's say you do theoretically lose, what are your plans for next year?

D: If I lose this year, I am going to try one more time next year and then I stop.

Wolsink

W: Yes, very hard. Dusty . . . but it was looking for a good line, and keep them there. And sometimes take the worst line but the fastest, so you can pass. Otherwise, you never can make up two bad starts like this to get in front on the American tracks . . . you know, in the Trans-Am, where it's nearly impossible to make up.

MXA: Well, in the second moto, you were next to last when you came through the second turn. What happened in the second turn?

W: I crashed. Somebody knocked me down and Jimmy came from the inside, sliding to the outside, and I was pushed to the inside by somebody. I don't know who he was . . . it doesn't matter. But suddenly I was on the ground. And then I looked and it was Pomeroy and I thought . . . Roger is in the front and he will win the race. That was my first thought when I restarted. So, I think, I have to get going. My leg hurt.

MXA: You got up right away and were still at the back of the pack but you weren't . . .

W: The fourth or fifth turn I was already at the back of the pack so I didn't lose or look at my handlebars. In the first lap I was making everything (the bike) a little bit right to get it going.

MXA: At about the ninth or tenth turn you were already through the middle of the pack.

W: Yeah. But it's easier when you come completely from the back because you start on your own speed. So you're rushing into it. If you start in the middle of the pack you don't have the acceleration. You are on their rhythm, so it's very difficult to come out of that. Especially in the first moto. Not in the second one. Because most riders are a little tired already and they don't go that much. The tracks get worse. The second motos are easier for us than the first ones, with squirrels.

MXA: The guys who really shouldn't be there?

W: Oh! You need 30 guys to have a race. You cannot say . . .

MXA: But you aren't racing 30 guys. You're racing about five.

W: Yeah. But it's always . . . it's in every sport. You need 25 riders to make a race.

MXA: I counted three laps and you were I think in fifth or sixth place.

W: Yeah. I was behind Heikki and

Marty Smith. I caught up to them and then Heikki passed Mosier. So then I had to take Mosier. It was halfway in the race. And I still saw Roger and Brad on the other side. I just kept it going. I kept it open, but I had nothing to lose at that point. But then I went to pass Mosier on the downhill and I went fast on the inside and he came to the outside and squared it out on the bottom. But I never could make that turn. I tried to, but I couldn't. I had to go farther down and hit a berm and then up again. So he squared me off and my front wheel got stuck in the frame of his bike.

MXA: Oh, you hit then?

W: Oh yeah, I hit him. And he felt it, but he didn't know that I crashed.

MXA: I wondered what happened, because all of a sudden you were both behind.

W: Then my front brake was gone. Just the cable to it, so I didn't have a front brake. It bothered me a bit. The handlebar was bent and my goggles were full of sweat, but I kept going. I said, why not? And then I saw Roger . . . standing at the pits . . . So then I got a sign that Roger was out, so then it was Mikkola, Mosier and me. So then I was thinking and I stuck to Mosier, because in two laps I made ten seconds on him. Then I said, now I go for it. But the bike handled really bad. The suspension, the rear suspension — I didn't have any because it was bottoming. I just kept going. I was catching up to Gaylon and I knew where I should pass him and put a little pressure on him and then he spun out. So then I passed him and I saw Heikki in the meantime, so I said, now I probably win the race. But I didn't! But I had the luck today of winning overall.

MXA: When you finished, did you know that you had won the overall — did you know that the Olympic System was going to be used?

W: I knew that the Olympic System was going to be used based on time. And I checked it directly with people after I finished.

MXA: Because if they had used the World Championship points, then you would have been second, and Heikki would have won. Is that used at every race?

W: It's a common international thing that you have . . . lesser points in the shortest time is the winner. When you have a tie, it's a time thing. That was always the procedure. Now when the two heats are counting, some promoters in the U.S. do not have the time and use the last moto. That's the deciding of the overall winner. Here the overall winner is very important for the money — the contingency money and the publicity.

MXA: Not so much in Europe?

W: Not so much in Europe. Yeah, you win the Grand Prix and it's an honor thing. But nothing extra. But when you have the Championship points . . . now some clubs make it easy and they just count the Championship points together for overall. But that's what a few are doing. Most are doing the Olympic System.

MXA: Well, this makes four times in a row. Would you say somebody's smiling on you?

W: Maybe somebody's smiling here. But like Roger won five times in Namur in the Belgian GP, so somebody must be smiling on him there.

MXA: You have a good feeling here?

W: When I come to the States I just feel good.

MXA: You've got confidence.

W: Yes. I like the way the Americans live and the way it's going here. And I like the race, how it is, the atmosphere, and it's also in the middle of the GP season when I'm getting my peak.

MXA: Are you a slow starter, do you think?

W: No, because last year I won the first GP. But mostly I get dropped down after the first or the second one. I get a little down. I lose interest a little bit, and then it goes up again. And maybe it's too late again this year. It's Heikki.

MXA: Do you think he can be stopped, or do you think it's pretty well over?

W: No. I broke down two motos with the chain coming off. When he gets two motos down, what is possible? Like Roger broke down today . . .

MXA: And Brad's been out.

W: And Brad's been out a couple of races, so why shouldn't he get . . .

MXA: But that isn't the way it always works.

W: No, you cannot count on it.

MXA: But theoretically . . .

W: I mean, it's a very mechanical sport. I don't think that you can last 24 motos without problems.

MXA: I asked Heikki if he liked coming over here and he said he didn't. He said that it's too far and it was too much trouble and that he was sort of glad there was no 500 GP here next year. How do you feel about that?

W: I say the United States deserves a GP. They deserve two 500 GPs. One in the east and one in the west.

MXA: Well, you know the situation right now. There's going to be a 250 in

Lackey

different thing again.

MXA: I heard some comments about how you passed Roger in the rough stuff at one of the races in Europe prior to Carlsbad, and it sort of surprised him, because of the way your bike went through it so smoothly.

L: Well, we have the handling pretty well sorted out. I don't think there are any advantages as far as how much travel we have. I think everybody is pretty equal there. They've been having some shock problems. But we've been using the Fox shocks and are really happy with them.

MXA: Have you been using the Fox shocks all the way along?

L: Yeah.

MXA: How many changes has Steve made to your bike?

L: Made a few improvements. They've had one problem over here in the States with the gearboxes and we haven't had any because of what Steve did.

MXA: You have had good reliability?

L: Yeah. Just like I said, a flat tire and we lost a chain one time in a muddy race. It's been really good. No problems with the bike whatsoever.

MXA: With the GPs that are left, where is your best chance?

L: I should be strong enough to do well in Canada, then I'm going to fly over to England right away and I will try really hard there. I think the last three races after I go home and have a month off will be a lot better for me.

MXA: How do you like being away from home? Does everything agree with you?

L: Yeah. We've got the Dodge van over there for Steve to take the bikes in, and it's a lot easier than the other stuff that's available over there. I've sent my motor home over and I'm traveling with my family in it to the races. It's really a lot easier than it normally would be, so everybody's pretty happy.

MXA: Do Lorie and the baby go with you to all the races?

L: Except for this one we've had four months with her every day, so we dropped her off for a week or so.

MXA: What did you think about Carlsbad? Was it fun to be home?

L: Yeah, but you can't relax because you've got to go to another race right away that's really important and a lot of pressure is still on, so it's not as fun as being home with nothing to do.

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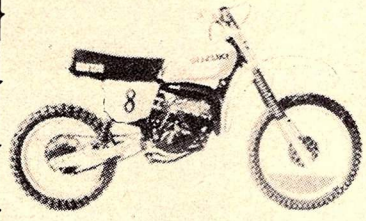

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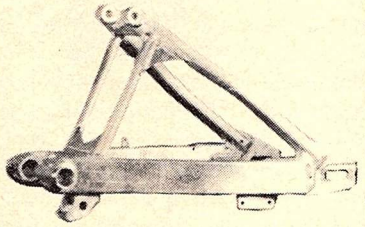

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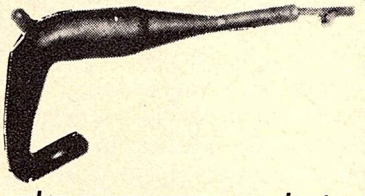

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W: No 500. But countries in Europe have the 250 and a 500 and 125 like Belgium. They always have everything.

MXA: Do you know any of the reasons why this happened?

W: Yes — 16 or 17 countries will want to run a GP and they only give 12, so it's on the rotation system. But mostly it's Czechoslovakia which doesn't get a 500, or Holland. But Luxembourg always have a 500 GP. And they say it's tradition, but for the industry, you have to look at that too. The United States deserves a GP for the motocross sport, business and everything. And that's just the way it is.

MXA: It would make more sense if there were two here, because to travel all this way and only run one race, and then go all the way home, does make it seem a long way for just one event.

W: Yes, to make one in the east and one in the west because this is such a big country, and there is so much interest in motocross. They should grab the situation.

MXA: Well, there was some talk about buying out one of the countries and still having it . . . do you think that's possible?

W: I don't know. To have a GP is always a big deal. It's the top race in the country.

MXA: What are some of the comments you heard about not racing here next year?

W: We have guys like Heikki. And it's an expensive thing. Like van Velthoven came here and has no points. Banks came here and has no points. Hakan no points. Aberg no points. It's a lot of expense for no results. And Schmitz . . . . . I don't know what he did, but he didn't do too well. But Maico pays him to come over. But Jaak has to pay his own expenses. Banks has to pay his own expenses. Montesa pays for Andersson.

MXA: Although his bike didn't arrive 'til the last minute.

W: Yeah. His bike arrived last night at 2:00. So it is very difficult to get ten Europeans over here. Because you only have three or four or five factory riders and the others are mostly semi-sponsored through importers and stuff like that who are on the top. So it's always a difficult thing to get the riders. So there are a lot of private riders who say it's good there is no Grand Prix in the U.S. because we always lose out, especially now if all the heats count.

MXA: There were a couple of riders in the top three, four or five here, Pomeroy, for instance, who is not contesting the GP season, that more or less took away points. Does that happen in every GP in every country?

W: Well, it's like a strange situation. We have to decide in Holland and in Europe what class you go to ride, at the beginning of the season.. 250 or 500 or 125. Then you ride national in this class and GPs in this class. But here the riders do all the nationals, 250 and 500 . . .

MXA: They aren't allowed to run two classes of GPs, though, they have to make a choice. We have two GPs, a 125 and a 500. They have to decide which at the start of the season.

W: In Europe, all the National Federation do it from the beginning. It's settled in February.

MXA: So you know what's going to happen and who you're going to race against. But isn't it a fact that when you run in certain countries . . . like, for instance, if you ran in Holland, that you run the 250 too?

W: Oh yeah. They asked me to run, but we have to start in the second row also. So they do it for spectators, but we don't like it, because you're running into the wheels of . . . but you have to look at the money too. It's business . . .

MXA: How has it been spectator-wise at the events so far?

W: Oh, very fantastic. Italy was 50,000 and Germany was 40,000. Finland was good. Sweden had other circumstances — 6000 or 7000. But for that area, nobody lives there. Holland had a good race, but they don't pay. Italy, the more spectators we get still pays minimum start money. I mean $200 and they don't even pay the World Champion more or the second or the third. They have a GP and make lots of money but they don't pay as they should.

MXA: What does it cost to attend the GP? As a spectator.

W: Six to seven dollars.

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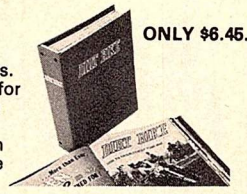

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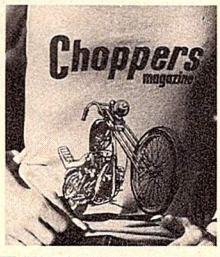

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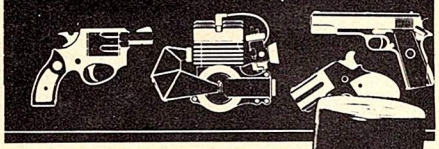

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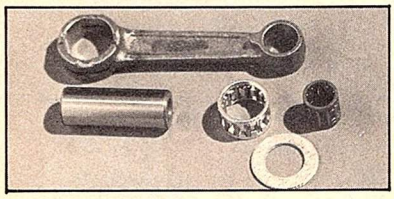

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MXA: Do you know what it costs here?
W: I heard ten dollars.
MXA: And four dollars for a seat in the grandstand.
W: Well, that's pretty much.
MXA: The attendance, judging by last year and the year before, seemed down. I don't know what it was.
W: I had the impression too that there were not as many people. You could see it mostly on the outside of the pits on the fence, because there were not so many people standing there. I've seen three or four rows of people just wanting to go in there. But they also had more bleachers this year in the grandstand, so it makes a difference.
MXA: People won't move once they're sitting there.
W: There are a lot of those. But if you are going to make prices of $10.00 . . .
MXA: Do you think that's comparable, depending on the cost of living? I mean, comparable to what, say, a Belgian or somebody in Holland would earn?
W: They pay six dollars or seven dollars and they complain about it . . . that it's expensive. They complain of the high cost.
MXA: Does that cut the attendance?
W: International races it cuts. Or they go by themselves. They don't take friends or women or families. No families anymore because it's too expensive. When you take your family — mom and dad and two kids — it's four people, and it's $48. You have to park your car (I don't know if it's free), plus there's gas, and you have to eat . . .
MXA: What are your plans for next season? Let's say that the odds are pretty much against you right now for winning the Championship . . . Heikki's got a substantial lead. Do you plan on giving it another shot next year, or have you got other plans?
W: No, I just go on. As long as Suzuki pays me, and keeps paying me well . . .
MXA: You still feel you're competitive.
W: Yes. When they do not give you contract anymore, that means you're not competitive anymore. And when you're not competitive it's no fun. You don't enjoy it. And you run your ass off and get a tenth place every Sunday, or seventh, or sixth. Then you think, what am I doing? The way down is so quick that then I stop, because I don't want to run around out there like a fool.

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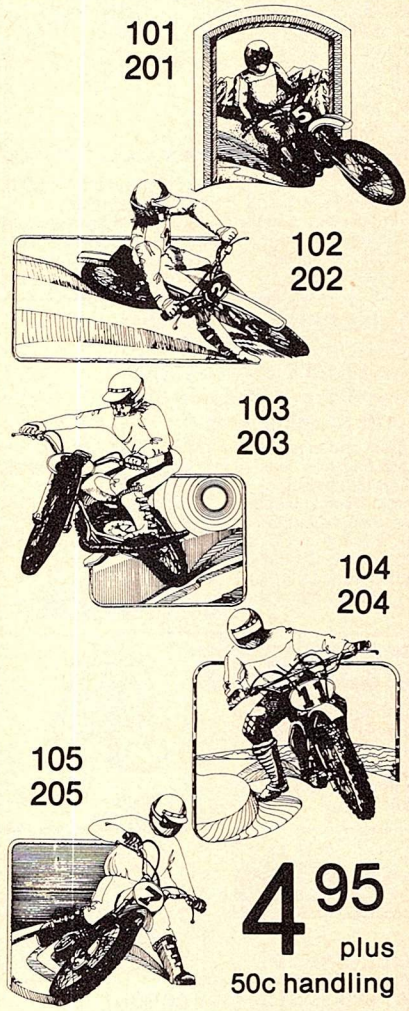

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MOTO-X FOX

Continued from page 25

could ride a pogo stick and win." Does he have any weaknesses? These races were all on basically sand courses. Perhaps on hard tracks he isn't that superior. But I wouldn't bet on it. I did hear it said that he gets homesick when he travels very far from Finland. This is why he has never run the entire Trans-AMA Series. So that may influence him later in the year.

Also very important this year is the fact that every moto counts. Previously only the best finishes in "half the motos plus one" counted. In a 12-race (24-moto) season only the best 13 motos would count. If that method were in effect now Heikki's lead would be virtually impossible to close. Now that every moto counts, however, it is not so secure. A couple of DNFs would make it a close race again. It could happen.

After Heikki the competition is very even between Brad Lackey, Roger DeCoster and Gerrit Wolsink. Brad has had two DNFs, one due to a shock failure (before he switched to Fox Airshox) and another due to a tossed chain. Except for these drawbacks he would probably be in second place in the standings instead of fourth. Heikki, Roger and Gerrit have garnered points in every moto so far. One major difference between this year and last for Brad is the starts. Last year Brad could not get his machine out of the hole and consequently was always riding a come-from-behind race. This year on the Honda Brad just slips it into third gear and comes out of the hole like a champ. He was in the top two or three into the first turn in five of the six motos I saw. Brad is pleased with the motorcycle and confident of his own abilities. He has his body in shape, he goes fast and he very rarely makes a mistake. You have to see Brad in Grand Prix competition to appreciate how really good he is.

The R.D., Mr. Motocross, Roger DeCoster is after an unprecedented sixth 500cc World Championship. He has not had a good beginning to the season. He has had very poor starts (in the six motos he was in the top ten on the first lap only twice). Something seems to be a little bit off with Roger. Maybe it is the bike, maybe it is Roger, or maybe it is the relationship between the two of them. But what is noticeable is the fact that the bright yellow Suzuki and Roger aren't as smooth this year. The bike gets out of shape more often,

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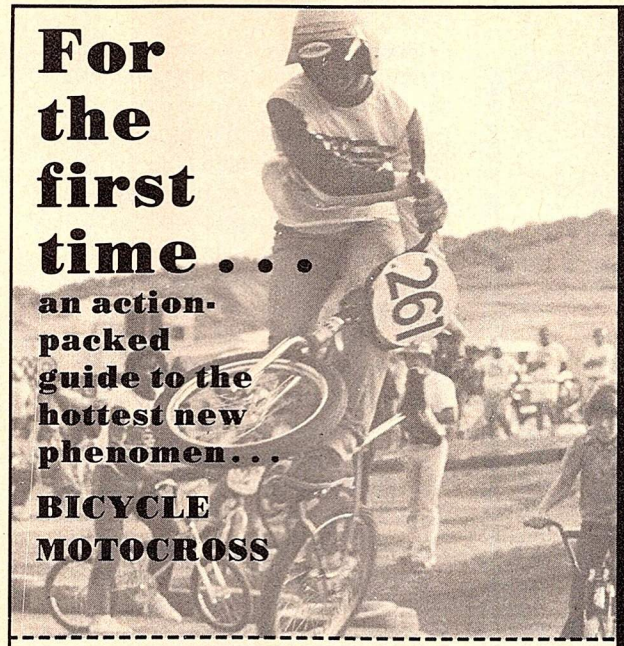

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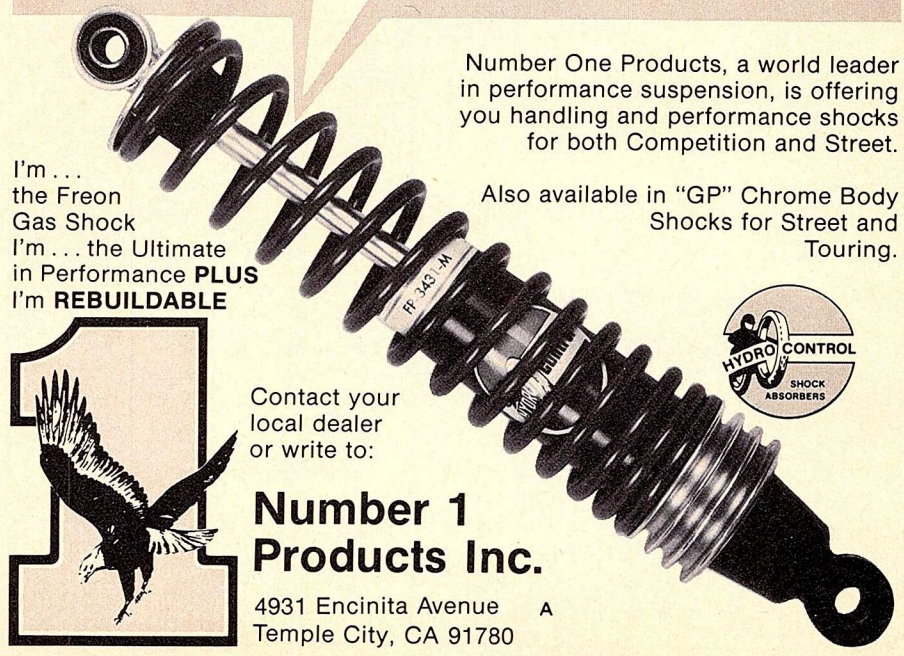

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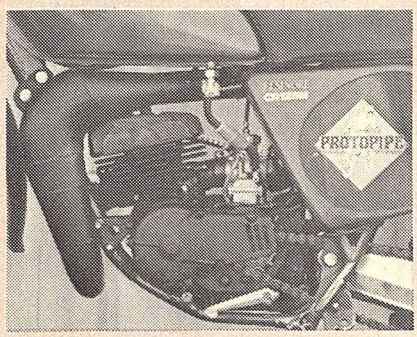

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sometimes scarily so. Perhaps the poor starts are causing him to ride harder than he would like to in order to catch up. Probably it is just a little thing that he will be able to sort out. Maybe it is just Heikki looking so good that makes the R.D. look less than perfect. The important thing is that even with things not quite right, Roger is still in second place. If Heikki should falter, Roger will be there ready to make his move.

Gerrit Wolsink has shown the same kind of ability as Brad and Roger. He has gotten some good starts and some bad starts. He has had problems with chains a number of times. But he has picked up points in every moto with mostly second, third and fourth-place finishes. And he has Carlsbad to look forward to, where he has had a magic spell on the track for three years.

These four riders are totally above the rest. They can make a mistake or have a problem and still get back up and pass everyone except the other guys in this elite group. Brad proved it in Holland coming from last to fourth. Heikki proved it in Sweden coming from far back to second. Roger did it in Finland coming from dead last to fourth. Gerrit hasn't put on quite so spectacular a show yet, but only because he hasn't had to.

When you get beyond Heikki, Brad, Roger and Gerrit it is more of a dogfight. Adolf Weil, Graham Noyce, Pierre Karsmakers, Willi Bauer, Jaak van Velthoven, Herbert Schmitz, Hakan Andersson and Bengt Aberg are in this group. In my opinion the top domestic American riders have a little edge on these men. People like Marty Smith, Jim Pomeroy, Kent Howerton, Tony DiStefano and Bob Hannah might be able to consistently beat these riders . . . at least on American-style tracks. Pierre is marginally above this group. He has shown ability to run at the front, but lacks consistency. He also doesn't seem to have enough endurance at this point in the season.

Graham Noyce seems to be a different rider than last year. He's good, no question about that, but he isn't a threat to win a moto. Perhaps he is calming down and trying to ride more consistently. He is very young, and that could be very good long-term planning. There are other good European riders that we don't hear about in the U.S.A. These guys don't have the money to get to all the European GPs, much less make the trip to Carlsbad. But they may be up-and-coming forces to be considered in the future. These include guys like Arne Lindfors of Sweden, Arne Lodal of Denmark and Peter Herlings and Frans Sigmans of Holland. Toon Karsmakers of Holland (one of three racing Karsmakers brothers) took ninth place in one moto of the Dutch GP.

EQUIPMENT

One fact is immediately evident in Europe. Japanese bikes do not prevail. Maico seems to be the favorite, followed by Husqvarna. In all three races that I attended in the GP class there were only two Suzukis entered (Roger and Gerrit), one Honda (Brad) and three Yamahas (Heikki, Pierre and the four-stroke of Aberg). But in Holland there were 16 Maicos entered and six Husqvarnas. In Sweden there were nine Maicos and ten Husqvarnas. In Finland eight Maicos and nine Husqvarnas. What about the Support classes? Only Holland had 250cc Support racing. There the count by brand was: Maico 38, Husqvarna 27, KTM 17, Ossa 15, Yamaha four, Suzuki three, Bultaco two, Montesa, CZ, Honda and Kawasaki one each.

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Sweden had no Support racing at all, a refreshing approach. Both Holland and Finland had 125cc races. In the 125 class the Japanese brands did prevail. The overall count was: Suzuki 29, Yamaha 27, Honda ten, Kawasaki five, KTM and Maico four each and Husqvarna three. The conclusion is obvious. The European manufacturers are outclassed in the 125 racing, but in the other classes they are more than competitive. One reason is that parts for Japanese bikes are harder to get.

Technically the newest thing is Brad's Honda. It definitely has more travel than the competition. The forks are 39mm in diameter for rigidity and they have about 12 inches of travel. The design is unique in that it is supposed to be more like a shock than a standard fork. They use only springs. The parts look more like production than prototype parts, which bodes well for Honda fans. The engine stands tall in the frame, indicating a long-stroke design. Breathing is through reeds on the intake. The cylinder head is a unique design. Rear suspension uses 17½-inch Fox Airshox, giving about 11-11½ inches of travel. This is more than anyone else is running. The Yamahas of Heikki and Pierre seem to be running about 10 inches in front and 10½ inches in the rear. The Suzukis of Roger and Gerrit are using about 9½ inches front and rear. Adolf Weil is running 10½ inches in the rear. He has done this by using 14¼-inch shocks and a special bowed swingarm similar to the KTM. This keeps the bike from being too tall without relocating the upper shock mount. There are some 38mm Ceriani forks being used. Both Suzuki and Yamaha works forks are the combination spring/air variety.

In tires the name is Metzeler. The top four riders used 4.50x18 Metzelers at every event. Bengt Aberg and Hakan Andersson were experimenting with the 5.00x17 Trelleborg with the Sun rim. These were all sand tracks. It will be interesting to see if a different combination is used at Carlsbad where the track gets hard.

The Maico of Graham Noyce featured a new countershaft sprocket arrangement. A third shaft in the transmission is used so as to move the sprocket closer to the swingarm pivot point. This reduces chain problems. Arne Lodal rode the latest prototype Husqvarna. It features a new rear hub which is wider than the production version. It also has engine cases which

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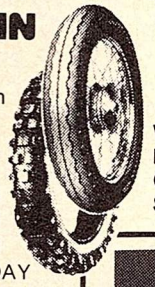

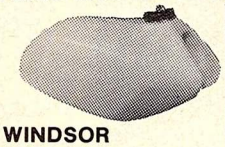

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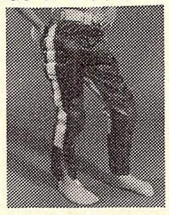

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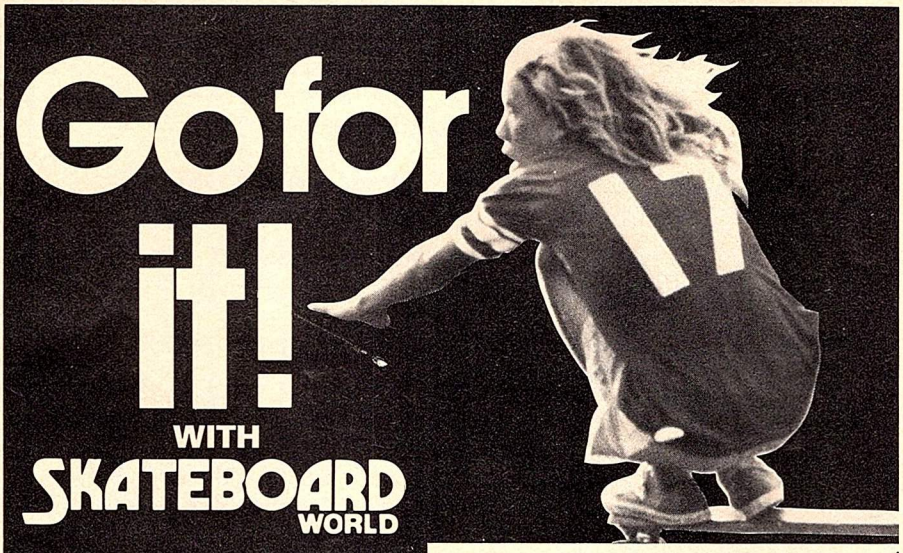

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appear to be designed to try to move the counter sprocket closer to the swingarm pivot.

On the shock absorber scene, there are three new brands. A year ago Koni was dominating with their reservoir shocks. This year I only noticed two riders using them, DeCoster and Noyce. The Maicos of Adolf Weil and Herbert Schmitz featured a green shock from Germany called a Mundt. Wolsink was using White Power shocks from Holland. Hulco shocks from Holland are still being used. Quite a few riders were using Ohlin shocks from Sweden. It is quite likely that this reservoir shock will come standard on Husqvarnas in the fall. Pierre has tried a prototype Koni shock on his Yamaha but has had problems with it. Heikki uses a special monoshock with a remote reservoir. Brad has tested both Koni and Ohlin shocks on his Honda, but prefers and uses Fox Airshox. Koni, Mundt, Ohlin, White Power and Hulco are all of the same basic design. They use remote reservoirs and dual-rate springs. Currently all are very low production items and very high priced if available at all.

FINAL COMMENTS

This year we experienced that Europe is indeed a large place too. Last year the races we attended were all close together. This year Holland was followed by Sweden. The drive between the two courses took about 30 hours of driving time and two ferry crossings of one hour each. From Sweden to Finland wasn't too bad, thanks to the 12-hour ferry crossing. But there was a strike on the ferry line which only ended a few days before the crossing. If the ferry hadn't been available it would have required a formidable drive into Lappland beyond the Arctic Circle to get to Finland. It would have been at least four solid days of driving.

The crowds at these races weren't especially huge. Sweden had only about 5000 people, but the race was held so far from any population that this isn't too surprising. Finland had about 10,000 spectators, which isn't bad considering that the population of the entire country is about four million. In each country the people were extremely friendly in spite of the fact that I spoke only a few words of their languages. The organizers were always helpful. These personal contacts with warm people made the trip a pleasure.

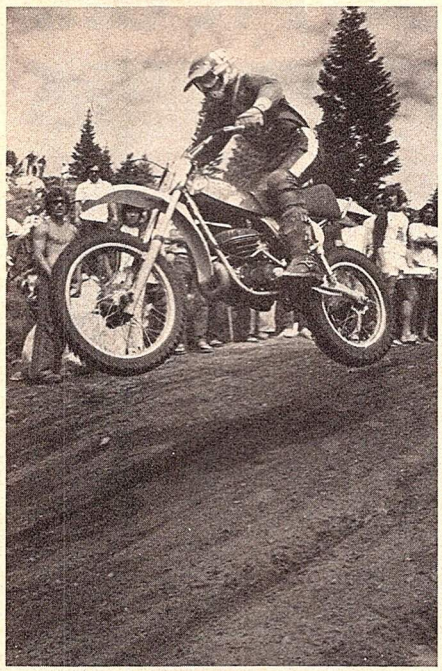
MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN

Continued from page 47

looking for a real workout, only to get more than he bargained for with two qualifying motos and four main events. Gaylon smoothly rode to third in both 250 motos to take third overall for the day, but was later to pull off the track from sheer exhaustion in the final Open moto, not being fully recovered from a bout with the flu.

Robertson sailed into the lead in the final moto, with Bell working his way through the pack to catch the flying Robertson. A gas tank leak midway into the moto stalled both Bell and his bike, putting Mike out of the money. Sherman Schneller put in a great ride coming up to catch and eventually pass Robertson for the last moto win. But it mattered little, as Robertson knew he had the overall and pocketed a cool $750 for his day's work. Sherman Schneller muscled his stock RM Suzuki across second with a tiring Mosier in for third. Darryl Shultz, after a horrendous qualifier get-off, came in fourth.

Team Kawasaki looked like they were going to outdistance the field, with Gary Semics gassing out to a quick lead, only to have his shock pretzel out along with his chance for the win. He came back to win the final moto, but his first moto DNF put him out of the money. Teammate Terry Clark picked up the marbles with a couple of strong seconds to take the overall win. Rich Eierstedt had the gas on, taking the first moto win, only to get crashed in the second moto. Rich still managed to work his way up to sixth by the end of the moto, with Bay Area rider Parry Klassen sailing in second followed by San Diego's Steve Rhyan on his KTM. Eierstedt took fourth on his Bul with Dave Miller sliding in for fifth for his day's efforts.



Greg Robertson came back to Mammoth to pick up where he left off in '73 by leaping to victory in the 250 pro class.

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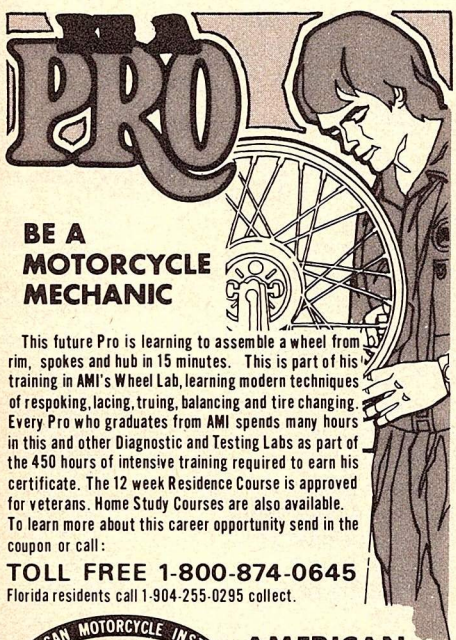

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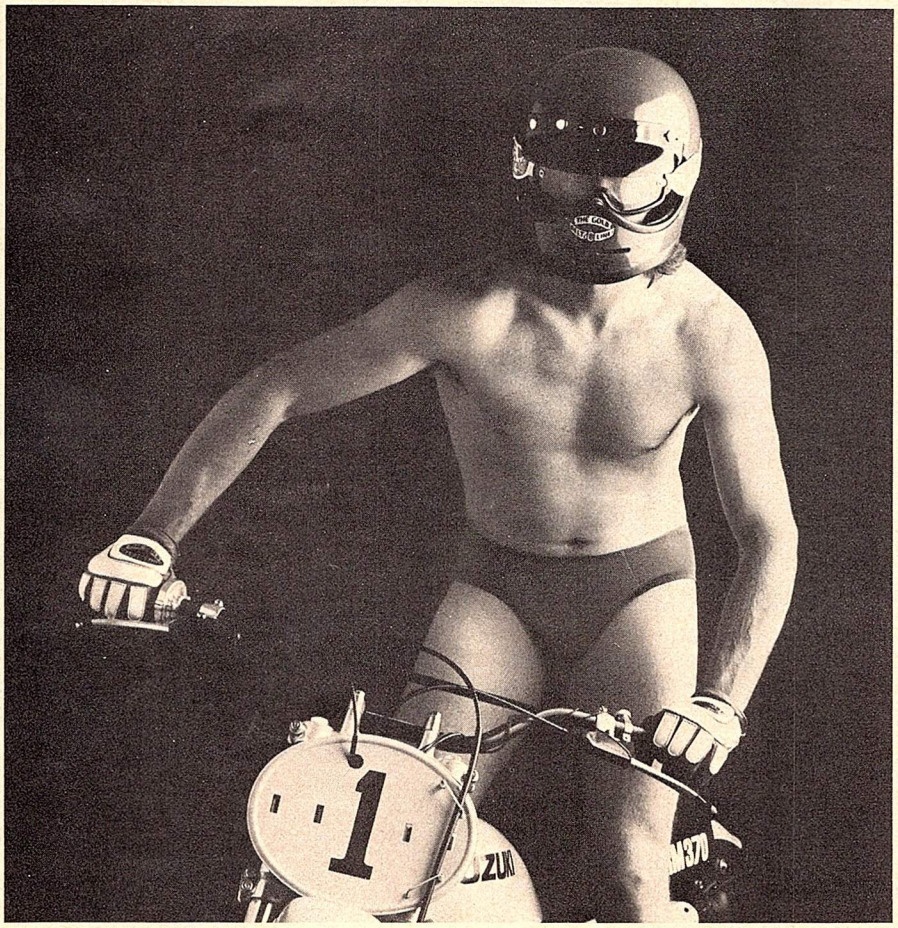

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ABERG REPLICA

Continued from page 55

heavy plastic sheath placed around it and better guides. A piece of wire helped, but never totally cured the cable guide problem. Everyone disliked the particular bend of bars on our bike, but since the kit doesn't tell you what bars to use, your personal preference will be your guide.

The side panels are not integral number plates. Those have to be added separately. The reason is that in Sweden the racing organizations demand that all number plates be mounted back by the rear wheel, Husky-style. Even RM Suzukis and bikes with built-in plates have to have another set added in Sweden. Thus this Swedish-designed bike didn't want to have side panels that looked like number plates. You got that?

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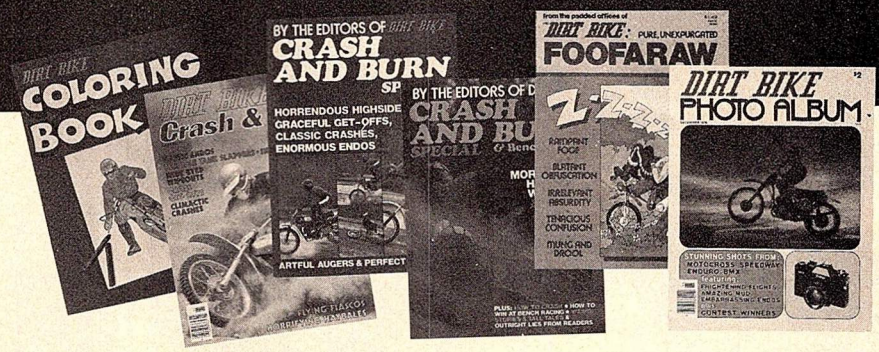

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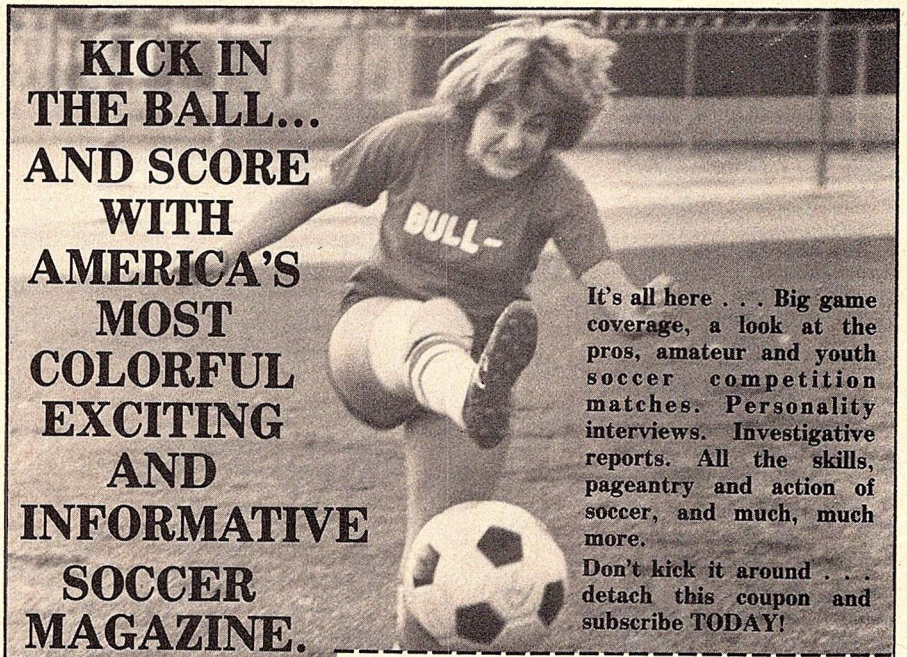
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